

*The
Mystery and Romance
of Israel*

JUDAISM and CHRISTIANITY
Agreements and Differences

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PSALMS OF ISRAEL
THE MESSIANIC HOPE OF ISRAEL

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FOREWORD

The following chapters were written at intervals, and served, many of them, as spoken messages to Jewish hearers, and then held fast by the pen. This will explain the unavoidable repetition, here and there, of a few ideas.

What gives unity to them is their concern to make the Jewish enquirer understand the contents of the Christian message, and to make the non-Jew take a more intelligent interest in the Jewish people. There is a deep underswell of home-sickness after the God of their fathers in many a Jewish breast. And more and more Jewish lips are being opened to confess the Name above every name, the Name so long ignored in Jewry.

I believe that we are on the threshold of great events in Israel. May the divine blessing rest on these pages!

MAX I. REICH

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PART ONE

*The Mystery and Romance
of Israel*

Chapter I

THE MYSTERY AND ROMANCE OF ISRAEL

“**W**HAT advantage then hath the Jew? or what profit is there of circumcision? Much every way: chiefly, because that unto them were committed the oracles of God.” Rom. 3:1,2. By this term, “oracles” the apostle means the living, divine communications—in other words, the Holy Scriptures.

“For I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh.” Rom. 9:3. Please notice that the apostle did not actually wish such a thing—he could not—but he almost wished it. Paul here is like Moses. When because of Israel’s sin God threatened to wipe them out and start a new nation from the descendants of Moses, he cried, “Forgive their sin—; but if not, blot me, I pray thee, out of Thy book.” Paul loved his people according to the flesh, even as Moses did.

Then Paul proceeds to tell us of the spiritual privileges of those who are Israelites. Nationally they were God’s sons. The glory, the shekinah, dwelt in the midst of them. To them were given the covenants, the old covenant and the new covenant. To them pertained “the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises; whose are the fathers, and of whom as con-

cerning the flesh Christ came, who is over all, God blessed for ever. Amen." Paul cannot mention the name of the Lord without breaking forth in a doxology!

"Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved." Rom. 10:1. The apostle comes to God in prayer for the salvation of his nation. Evidently he believed in the possibility of Israel being saved. That prayer was offered by inspiration, and is surely laid up before God. The Lord never forgets a prayer that is inspired by Himself. It may take a certain length of time before that prayer is openly answered, but God will not overlook it.

Zacharias and Elisabeth, of the house of Aaron, when young married people, prayed for a son; however, they got to be very old before that prayer was answered. In fact, the aged priest had even forgotten he had ever offered such a prayer, for when Gabriel appeared he was amazed, so Gabriel said, "Fear not, Zacharias: for thy prayer is heard; and thy wife Elisabeth shall bear thee a son, and thou shalt call his name John." Although Zacharias had forgotten, God had not. Even so, the prayer of Paul for the salvation of Israel will not be overlooked. It is going to be answered in God's own time.

The controversy with Israel hinges on the question, How can man be righteous? The gospel message is, If a man desires to be righteous, he must accept righteousness as the free gift of grace. You cannot work yourself into it by good works, or screw yourself into it by religious emotions; you must come as a bankrupt, with empty hands, and receive it as a gift.

Read the eleventh chapter: "Hath God cast away his people? God forbid." He has a controversy with them, but has He cast them away? Paul attempts to show in these verses that, although God has laid Israel *aside*, He has not cast them *away*. "For I also am an Israelite, of the seed of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin." Paul's own conversion is the pledge of the conversion of his people. Paul tells us that he was as "one born out of due time," and declares, "For this cause I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might shew forth all longsuffering, for a pattern to them which should hereafter believe on him to life everlasting." 1 Tim. 1:16. The people from whom Paul sprang are going to be converted too, and that is why he says he is "one born out of due time." (1 Cor. 15:8) —prematurely. As Paul was converted by the glory of the descending Lord, so Israel shall be converted in like manner. Paul's conversion is evidence that "God hath not cast away his people which He foreknew."

In Romans 11:13 Paul says, "For I speak to you Gentiles, inasmuch as I am the apostle of the Gentiles, I magnify mine office." He tells us that Israel is a good olive tree, and although some of the branches were broken off (v. 17), others are left in the olive tree. The "remnant according to the election of grace" are the branches that remain.

"And if some of the branches be broken off, and thou, being a wild olive tree, wert grafted in among them, and with them partakest of the root and fatness of the olive tree; boast not against the branches." (I should like to read that to Herr Hitler if I had oppor-

tunity). "Thou bearest not the root, but the root thee." That is to say, the Hebrew Christians are the remnant according to the election of grace; they are in their own olive tree, and the Gentiles who are saved have been grafted in among them. It is not that we Hebrew Christians have come over and have been grafted into your wild olive tree, but it is you Gentiles that have been cut out of your wild olive tree and have come to ours. I am so glad to see so many erstwhile wild branches in my good olive tree! You are not wild any more for my good olive tree has taken the wildness out. If words mean anything, that is what these verses teach.

"Thou wilt say then, The branches were broken off, that I might be grafted in. Well; because of unbelief they were broken off, and thou standest by faith. Be not highminded, but fear: for if God spared not the natural branches, take heed lest he also spare not thee." Rom. 11:19-21.

That is the solemn message I should like to echo to Gentile Christendom. "Take heed lest He also spare not thee. Behold therefore the goodness and severity of God: on them which fell, severity; but toward thee, goodness, if thou continue in His goodness: otherwise thou also shalt be cut off."

God used the pagans: Assyrians, Chaldeans, and Romans to chastise His people Israel; and there are millions of pagans today! They are getting militarized at present, and they may yet be God's instrument for chastising Gentile Christendom.

“And they also, if they abide not still in unbelief, shall be graffed in: for God is able to graff them in again.” Then in verse twenty-five he continues, “Blindness *in part* is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in.” I am so glad it is not total blindness or permanent blindness. Their eyes shall be opened. That is why I am an enthusiast for foreign missions. I want the gospel to be preached for a witness to the ends of the earth so that the fulness of the Gentiles will come in quickly, for the sooner that time comes, the sooner will blindness be removed from Israel’s eyes and they will be grafted in.

The situation is like this: Israel is like a scheduled train which has been put on a side track temporarily, and remains there until an unscheduled Gentile “special” passes through. When the line is clear the scheduled train will be put back on the main line again.* In the Old Testament, all the timing of events of world history and prophecy had to do with Israel. No time is set and no dates are given in connection with the unscheduled work of grace which has been launched among the Gentiles. When that work of grace has been completed then Israel, the people to whom the plan of prophecy is directed, will be put back on their own proper track.

I have entitled this message, “The Mystery and Romance of Israel.” I might have added, “The Problem of Israel,” but I did not want to make the title too long. That Israel has been a problem to the Gentile nations for a long time we cannot deny. However, remember

* I am indebted to my friend, Dr. H. Ironside, for this illustration.

that what people call the Jewish Problem is also a Gentile Problem.

Do not think that anti-Semitism is a thing that began yesterday. It is an ancient malady. Away back when the Hebrews were in Egypt they were complained of in exactly the same terms in which the so-called anti-Semites complain of the Jews today. Let me read you the words of Ex. 1:6-10. "And Joseph died, and all his brethren, and all that generation. And the children of Israel were fruitful, and increased abundantly, and multiplied, and waxed exceeding mighty; and the land was filled with them. Now there arose up a new king over Egypt, which knew not Joseph." (A good deal of the present Jew-hatred is due to ignorance regarding the Jews.) "And he said unto his people, Behold, the people of the children of Israel are more and mightier than we." (Envy is another cause of anti-Semitism.) "Come on, let us deal wisely with them; lest they multiply . . . and fight against us." (Thus fear is another element).

Ignorance, envy, and fear of the Jews are the three elements that produce anti-Semitism. History has repeated itself in our day. Everyone knows what happened to the Israelites in Egypt. They were brought down by oppression until they became the under-dogs of society. Not only were they made the slaves of the Egyptians, the doormats upon which they wiped their shoes, but there was an edict passed that the male children born to the Hebrews should be thrown to the crocodiles.

Notice how this crude method of attempted annihilation failed. Similar methods have failed every time they have been tried. God will not allow them to prosper. The Lord always makes the devil look ridiculous. I believe the devil is the most disappointed individual in the universe, for all his schemes go awry. Whenever he makes a move to upset the divine plan, God uses that very move to His own glory. Here was Pharaoh raised up by Satan to destroy the nation of Israel and thus to destroy the promised "Seed of the woman" who was to come from this people. Satan knew the Messiah was to come from among the Israelites, and that is why he inspired Pharaoh to destroy them. But in spite of the scheme Moses' life was preserved among the bulrushes, and he even became the adopted son of Pharaoh's daughter. Notice the triumph of God — through the very scheme Satan had hoped would defeat God's plan, the future leader of Israel was landed in the palace of Pharaoh there to be trained for his God-given task. Notice too the irony of the situation — his own mother was paid wages for nursing her own baby boy!

I never read in the New Testament until after I became a believer, but I remember how one day, in my lunch hour in my office in London, England, I took the Bible that we kept there for reference and it opened at the Book of Revelation. The first thing I saw was a description of a great dragon with seven heads and ten horns. I was so frightened I shut up the book. However, I now get great comfort out of that picture. The dragon has only seven heads for his ten horns!

He is limited. The perfect wisdom of God outwits him every time.

I have spoken of Pharaoh's plan of *annihilation*. Strangely enough, however, the Jewish people are still with us, in spite of all the sorrow and pain they have borne and the tears and blood they have shed. I came across the other day, in a book written eighty years ago by a learned bishop of the Church of Ireland, the following remarks:

“The savage and unrelenting persecution of the Jews has left an indelible blot on the pages of Christian history from the beginning of the eleventh century to the middle of the sixteenth. There is not a European nation, scarcely a European town of any size, the annals of which are not disgraced by the horrible cruelties practiced on this people. Popes, fathers, and Councils vied with one another in denouncing them. Edict after edict was issued against them. No insult was too coarse for them. Jew and devil were synonymous terms in the Christian vocabulary. They were outside the pale of humanity. Again and again the fury of the populace was let loose upon them. Houses were destroyed; wives and children were violated before their eyes; multitudes were put to death. Their Selichoth or synagogue hymns for centuries were one great continuous wail of mourning, as of Rachel weeping for her children and refusing to be comforted.”

These words could have been written today with regard to recent events in Central Europe. However, attempted annihilation has failed in spite of its ferocity.

There was also the method of *segregation*. For fifteen hundred years the Jews had to live in quarters of their own, called "ghettos," an Italian word meaning foundry. In those sections of the cities where there were unpleasant smells and where none else cared to have his domicile, the Jews were herded together, and they were not allowed to come out when the Christians had a feast or a holy day. When the Jew did come out to earn a living, nearly every honorable means of livelihood was denied him; he could only be a peddler of second-hand garments. He was forced to wear a yellow patch on his coat, and a conically shaped hat to make him a marked man. Today a Jew does not need to wear a big yellow patch on his coat. His appearance speaks for itself. In those days however his identity was not so evident. When the Jew returns to a normal way of living among men these distinguishing marks are thrown off as we see in Palestine today. But segregation has stunted his growth and marred his physique in other ways besides. Jewish children born in Palestine go back to type and are fine specimens of humanity.

Segregation did not solve the problem, but rather intensified it. I believe that in the Dark Ages there was more piety, decency and intelligence inside the ghettos than outside.

The method of *assimilation* has also been used. It is only a hundred years or so since that method was tried. It was then that the different nations of Europe removed from their statute books the laws against Jews. In Germany, about a hundred years ago, Jews

were allowed to leave the ghettos and become a part of the larger life, and they rushed into it with great avidity. It is said that half the Jewish population became nominally Christian. It looked as though all the Jews would quickly be assimilated.

Whatever the reason, it is not the will of God that the Jews be assimilated, any more than it was the will of God for Jonah to be assimilated when he ran away from God. No doubt you have felt very sorry for Jonah when he was inside his slimy prison, but you should have a little sympathy for the whale too. It must have been anything but a nice feeling to have an indigestible Jew in his stomach. I feel sorry for the Gentiles, for the Jew has been a problem, and today the Gentiles are again spewing out the Jew.

Another method is also being tried, that of *repatriation*. Today we see a beginning of that. However, it is not going to perform the miracle and solve the Jewish problem by itself alone. You remember, when Jacob came back to his native land, he did not have an easy time. He met Esau with an armed band. It is so today. The Arabs are the descendants of Ishmael and Esau, and they are withstanding their brethren the Jews. Jacob was driven into a corner, but through it he had face-to-face dealings with God. After the fight was taken out of him, he could only cling to the One who had mastered him. He went down a crippled Jacob, and he came up a victorious Israel, a prince, with the blessing of God upon him. Having gotten the victory in aloneness with God, he was able to face his brother Esau without fear. That is what is coming

for Israel. The national return will come first; the spiritual revival will come afterwards.

Regeneration is the only solution to the Jewish Problem. Not repatriation alone, nor any of the other methods we have named, but regeneration. It is pictured in Ezekiel's vision of dry bones. First the dry bones came together; then flesh and sinews and skin came on the bones; and then, by another act of God, the breath of heaven came into the bones and they stood on their feet a mighty army. The Jewish people, the dry bones collected and clothed and revived, will be God's "Salvation Army" in the millenium to carry the message of the Messiah to the ends of the earth.

There are many mysteries in the New Testament. Ministers are spoken of as stewards of the mysteries of God. There are twelve such connected with Christianity. "Great is the mystery of godliness," we read, "God manifest in the flesh." The person of our divine Lord is a mystery indeed to the natural man. When Peter made the declaration; "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God," the Lord said to him, "Flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven."

Christian experience also is a mystery. We read of "the riches of the glory of this mystery, which is Christ in you." One has to have the experience before he can understand what it means.

The Church is another mystery. The word is used many times concerning the Church. I do not mean the so-called "visible" church. It is broken up into

ever so many rival organizations. There is no mystery about them; their record is told in history. We know their founders, their development, how they reached their peak, and how many of them began to decline. But the true Church is a mystery. It is like that seamless robe which our Lord wore next to His heart. It must have been a beautiful garment for the soldiers did not like to tear it. Even so, the inner Church, the living Church remains one in spite of the external divisions in the visible church. There is no people under heaven more one than the people of God. We drink from the same Fountain. We worship in the same heavenly sanctuary, in the Holiest of all, behind the veil, all alike having boldness to enter in by the blood of Jesus. We are brought to a wonderful oneness and harmony in the Spirit. We do not need to create that union, but we simply recognize it and endeavor to keep it in the bond of peace.

I remember how an evangelist, well known to me, was traveling in Germany before the Great War, in a Roman Catholic district. In one of the small compartments of the railway coach, he found himself alone with a Roman Catholic priest. It was not very long until they were in conversation. Said the priest, "Who do you think, sir, will be the redeemed in heaven?" My friend was rather curt and abrupt in his manner, and so he replied, "It won't be Roman Catholics." The priest was not offended. He said, "Will it be Lutherans?" "No." "Will it be the Reformed?" "No." And the priest went through the whole category of religious groups that existed in Germany. To each one the evangelist replied, "No, it will not be that church." At

last the priest said, "Well, I give up; you will have to tell me, who will be the redeemed in heaven?" So the evangelist turned to Rev. 7:9-14, and read, concerning that great white-robed company which John saw in heaven, "These are they which have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb." Up jumped the priest; he put his arms around the evangelist, and with tears he kissed his cheek. "Hallelujah," he said, "I have found a brother!" And my friend returned the compliment. If they had started to discuss their differences it would have led only to contention, but instead they saw their spiritual oneness and met on the common ground of redemption.

I remember being asked to hold a meeting. The place was crowded. The director of the meeting said, "Will you tell us what denomination you belong to?" That was an embarrassing question. There were many Christian bodies represented there. I doubted the wisdom of the question, but I had to give an answer, so I said: "I see many children of my heavenly Father here; they all belong to me even though they will not say I belong to them. But I am in a circle of fellowship which has the Lamb of God for its center and which is wide enough to include every ransomed soul under the canopy of heaven." Everyone smiled and no one was the wiser. The real Church is a mystery.

Among these mysteries is the mystery of Israel. You cannot understand the real purpose of Israel without divine illumination. A mystery is a secret to all except those who have been initiated. In Greek the word

“Mystery” means a state secret, and the kingdom of God has its secrets just as any other kingdom has.

Is there a story more romantic than the history of Israel? Take its origin. Do you know that the Jewish nation is the only one of whose origin we have reliable data? Can you tell me who was the first Englishman, or Welshman, or American? No one knows. But if you ask me who was the first Hebrew, I can answer, “Abram the Hebrew,” that is, a man from the other side and therefore a stranger in the land. He became the father of this people.

Again this nation is the only nation of whose future we have definite information. Can you tell me what is going to happen to the United States fifty years hence? Suppose fifty years ago some one had told you that a great colossus of an empire would collapse like a house of cards, and in its stead there would be a Communistic republic in which the under-dogs of the empire would be the leaders, you would have said he was romancing. Yet it has come to pass. Suppose fifty years ago some one had told you that the German empire would pass away with a big noise and in place of the Kaiser there would rule a former paper-hanger who would have ten times more power than the Kaiser ever dreamed of. You would have refused to believe it. But it has come to pass. Israel is the one nation concerning whom we know exactly what its future will be. The Bible gives not only the history of the past but the history of the future of this mysterious people. Could you say as much about any other nation of the world?

Let us look for a moment at the experiences of Israel. From a natural standpoint this people should have passed out of sight long ago. A people without a country, shattered into atoms and scattered all over the world — and yet still strangely one. The Jewish race is with us, not as a mummy under glass in a museum, but as a living factor to be reckoned with. Today there is no people more virile and up-to-date than the ancient Jews. The Jew is the miracle of history, his story is the history of miracle. The Bible sets forth two things: miracle and prophecy. As long as the Jewish race continues it is a witness both to the reality of the miraculous and the truth of prophecy.

What is God going to do with Israel? In Jer. 31:10 we have a message concerning Israel that is addressed to the ends of the earth. “He that scattered Israel will gather him.” You can see that the scattering is literal. The results are still in evidence. What scattered Israel? The Assyrians, the Babylonians, etc., you say! But it was God behind these nations; and the same God who scattered Israel will gather them. If the scattering was literal, the gathering will likewise be literal. This message is addressed to the Gentile nations because they are to know it. Hitler ought to know it. In his present treatment of the Jews he is ignorant of this.

Some may say, “Didn’t God fulfil this Scripture when the Jews came back from Babylon seventy years after the destruction of their city and sanctuary?” Let us see. Turn to Amos 9:14. “And I will bring again the captivity of my people of Israel, and they shall

build the waste cities, and inhabit them; and they shall plant vineyards, and drink the wine thereof; they shall also make gardens, and eat the fruit of them.” (This passage does not refer to the return from Babylon, as we shall see in a moment.) “And I will plant them upon their land, and they shall no more be pulled up out of their land which I have given them, saith the Lord thy God.” Were they not pulled up after their return from Babylon? Yes, they were scattered again and led into captivity after that terrible ordeal when the Romans destroyed Jerusalem in A.D. 70. They were so uprooted at that time that they have never recovered from the tragedy. However, God here speaks of a return that is going to result in a permanent dwelling in the land, so that return must be in the future still.

I said that God has set forth in Israel both miracle and prophecy. There are three miracles God has bound together: the miraculous people, the miraculous Book, and the miraculous Man. You cannot disentangle this threefold cord. Israel is a miraculous people in its origin, its preservation, and its revealed future. Their re-establishment in the land of Palestine will be as a resurrection. But there is another miracle we must connect with it, and that is the miracle of the Book. To Israel were committed the oracles of God, and that includes not only the Old Testament but the New Testament. I often use this argument in dealing with Jews. Some imagine that the New Testament is a Gentile fabrication, whereas the writers were Jews. Matthew, John, Mark, Peter, Paul, etc., all were Jews. What about Luke? some one asks. Well, I used to think

he was a Gentile, but I see that Dr. Scofield in the introduction to the Gospel of Luke in his reference Bible, positively declares that Luke was a Jewish Christian. I do not know where he obtained his data. Anyway, the Gospel of Luke is a Jewish book in spirit; the atmosphere is such that a Jew can readily find himself at home in it. The early chapters give us a beautiful picture of the origin of the Christian movement among the hidden saints in Israel. So the Bible, both the Old Testament and the New Testament, has come out of the heart of the Jewish people. And, like the people of Israel, this Book is indestructible. You need never be in a panic about the future of the Bible. No weapon formed against it has ever prospered or will prosper. It has silenced every critic for centuries and it will continue to do so. It is a book of miraculous origin, for it was written by "holy men of God" who "spoke as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." 2 Peter 1:21.

The Bible has one remarkable feature. It bears the mark of the people from whom it has sprung. What kind of people were they? A suffering people; a nation that cried to God out of the depths; a race that has been humiliated, crushed, humbled, and oppressed. Out of their sorrow and pain has come this Book. Cut out of the Book of Psalms all that refers to suffering and you will not have much left. That is why this Book appeals to mankind. It will always have listeners, readers and lovers who will treasure it, for it appeals to broken hearts. As long as there are hearts that are weary and eyes that are sore; as long as men

are perplexed and bewildered by the enigma of life and the mystery of time and eternity, so long will this Book have those who will ponder its pages, for it will speak words of comfort, bind up broken hearts, and pour oil and wine into human wounds.

There is another remarkable thing about this Book—it is the frankest ever written. The critics claim that Jewish patriots have concocted the Bible in order to flatter Jewish national pride. I know that is how history is usually written, but that is not true about the Bible. When a Jew reads this Book he reads of his own shame. He sees himself as in a mirror, going awhoring from God to worship idols as did the nations round about, a provocation to God from the beginning. What about Judah, the ancestor of the tribe which bears his name? That is a shameful chapter in Genesis that cannot be read in public. What about David, their most notable king? There is a chapter of his life so dark and so sordid that it makes the crimson rush to the cheek of the Jew who reads it.

When I was in England a few years ago there was a great trial on. The former King, now the Duke of Windsor, sued a publisher who had put out a book portraying the Duke's life when King and telling of his relations with "Wally." Because of the reproach it involved, the Duke of Windsor made the publisher eat his words, otherwise it would have gone bad with him. Yet did David sue Nathan for defamation of character? No, he did not dare, for he knew that back of that record was God.

When the Jew reads the story of his nation he finds it full of indictment. Stephen summed it up in Acts 7:51-53 by saying: "Ye stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost: as your fathers did, so do ye. Which of the prophets have not your fathers persecuted? And they have slain them which shewed before of the coming of the Just One; of whom ye have been now the betrayers and murderers; who have received the law by the disposition of angels, and have not kept it."

Yet in spite of such accusations, the Book is treasured by the Jew. The orthodox Jew regards it as his choicest treasure. It was the only thing Israel took into exile when everything went to pieces for them. When throne and temple were overthrown and they were led into captivity, the Book was still theirs, and it was their solace and strength, the sheet anchor of their souls. The Scriptures enabled them to lift their heads amidst the sky scrapers of Babylon, and preserved a remnant to start afresh and build the temple again in preparation for the first advent of Christ. The miracle Book and the miracle people cannot be separated.

The central theme of the miracle Book is the miracle Man. The Old Testament testifies of Him. "Search the scriptures," said Christ to the Jews; "they are they which testify of me." John 5:39. The Old Testament joins its witness to the New Testament concerning the Christ. Like the men who carried the grapes of Eshcol on their shoulders, two before and two behind, the Old Testament before and the New Testament after bear witness to the glory of Christ. He is the

miracle Man of whom it was written, "His name shall be called Wonderful." "Wonderful" in Hebrew means "miraculous." He is miraculous in His birth, in His resurrection, in His throne life; and this miracle Christ who is the theme of the Bible is the son of this miracle people. That is the real reason for the existence of Israel. It was from them, according to the flesh, Christ came.

He is the Glory of Israel, though they do not yet acknowledge it. The eyes of Israel are still blinded to their brightest Glory. But remember the prophecy of Simeon. It was revealed to him by the Holy Ghost that he should not die until his eyes had seen the Lord's Christ, and he was led by the Spirit into the temple just as Christ was presented there. When he saw that Child he knew it was the Christ. He took him up in his arms, and as he looked into His face God became great in his sight, and he said, "Lord, now lettest Thou Thy servant depart in peace, according to Thy word: for mine eyes have seen Thy salvation, which Thou hast prepared before the face of all people; a light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of Thy people Israel." It was a prophecy concerning which there was not the slightest trace of fulfillment at the time. The world was wrapped in pagan darkness. Only in Israel was God known. Yet when Simeon looked on that Child he said He was a Light to lighten the Gentiles. Did he know how the light would come to you, and how messengers would carry the message of light to China, to India, to Africa, and the lands of heathen darkness? Yet he did not stop there. "And the glory

of thy people Israel." That has not yet come to pass. However, as surely as the first part of Simeon's prophecy is being fulfilled, the second part shall also.

Israel has had no glory since Christ and they parted company. He said, "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not. Behold, your house is left unto you desolate. For I say unto you, Ye shall not see me henceforth, till ye shall say, Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord." That is to say, God has written "Ichabod" over the people. Christ was the incarnate Glory in their midst, and when He said farewell to the temple it became desolate. The Glory departed—but not forever; only until they say, "Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord."

In Jewish Orthodox weddings the high point is when the bridegroom meets the bride under the canopy held by four friends of the bride, and the whole company breaks out in Hebrew saying, "Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord." They are rehearsing the conversion of Israel every time they have a wedding. When the Bridegroom returns He will bring the glory back, and penitent Israel will shout, "Blessed is He that cometh (as Bridegroom) in the name of the Lord." Simeon had the vision. Do you see how the miracle Book, the miracle people, and the miracle Man are bound together?

How can this come about, the final reunion between Israel and its glory? In Zech. 12:10 we read, "And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications: and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his firstborn. In that day shall there be a great mourning in Jerusalem as the mourning of Hadad-rimmon in the valley of Megiddon. And the land shall mourn, every family apart; the family of the house of David apart, and their wives apart; the family of the house of Nathan apart, and their wives apart. . . ."

And then there will be opened, says the prophet, a fountain for all sin and uncleanness; or, as Luther translates it in his beautiful German Bible, "a fountain free and open." Then will Israel take up that song which we sometimes sing, "There Is a Fountain Filled with Blood." They will doubtless make a slight change, and sing it:

"Dear dying Lamb, Thy precious blood
Shall never lose its power
Till *all the Israel of God*
Is saved to sin no more."

Let me remind you of John, the only one of the disciples who stood by the cross of Jesus. He was rewarded by seeing what no other disciple saw, that not a bone of Christ was broken when the soldiers came to break the limbs of the crucified ones. There flashed into his mind the Scripture, "A bone of it

shall not be broken." It was Passover time in Jerusalem and there was a Passover lamb in every house. The Jews were very careful not to break one of its bones. However, John realized that the Passover lamb was only a type. The true Passover Lamb was on the cross. And then he saw the soldier come and plunge his spear into the side of Him who had dismissed His spirit, and out came the stream of water and blood.

"Let the water and the blood,
From Thy wounded side which flowed,
Be of sin the double cure —
Cleanse me from its guilt and power."

It was love's answer to the world's hate. This spear-thrust, the last indignity imposed by wicked men upon our Lord, was answered by that which alone can wash away their crimson guilt. That very spear point was tinged with the crimson blood of the soldiers' redemption. Love and hatred met there, and love won the day.

John stood looking back to the Passover when the Israelites had come out of Egypt. "This day shall be to you the beginning of months," the Lord had said. With the Passover they made a beginning as a nation. Thus they will also make a new beginning. "They shall look upon Me whom they have pierced." In the shadow of the cross will Israel, having become a penitent nation, begin anew.

Israel has not yet come into the fulfilment of the covenant made by God to Abraham and confirmed to Isaac and Jacob, but as they began in type in Egypt they will begin again. They will arise and take up

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their wanderings afresh — not as of old, down the weary centuries tossed to and fro as a hare that is chased, but as the representatives of the once crucified but now glorified Messiah, His messengers to the uttermost parts of the earth.

NOTE: This opening chapter is a stenographically reported lecture. This will explain to the critical reader the difference in style, more popular spoken style having been adopted.

Chapter II

THE DESTRUCTION OF JERUSALEM AND ITS SPIRITUAL SIGNIFICANCE

THE Hebrews occupied the land of Palestine in round figures about a thousand years. During that period Jerusalem was captured many times and twice destroyed to the very ground. And it is a remarkable fact, if Josephus is to be trusted, that this destruction took place on the same day, known in Hebrew reckoning as the 9th day of the month Ab.

What influence had this two-fold catastrophe on the religion of the Jewish people?

The fate of the land of Israel was in a certain sense predetermined by geographical location. It forms with Syria the narrow corridor between the two mighty empires seated respectively on the banks of the Nile and of the Euphrates. Egypt and Babylon are the cradles of civilization and their ambition was to exercise imperial sway over the lands dividing them. Palestine became thus the apple of discord between them. In the picturesque language of Psalm CXXIX, the ploughshare of invasion went across the land forward and backward, cutting deep furrows in Israel's back. If the northern kingdom of Israel was able to maintain

its independence some 300 years, the southern kingdom of Judah some 450 years, it was mainly due to the weakness of the rival powers. The independence achieved under the Hasmonaeans lasted scarcely 100 years.

I.

The Prophet Amos saw clearly the dark thundercloud of Assyrian militarism on the distant horizon. Damascus had already been made tributary to the conqueror. The way to Samaria and to Jerusalem was being opened. It is true he does not mention the Assyrian by name. But that he had that power in mind is beyond doubt. He expects through this nation the ruin of Israel, again and again proclaiming to the people the doom of exile. It would appear that the fashion to transport whole nations out of their land, in order thus to destroy national unity, was first introduced by the Assyrians. Hoseah on the other hand names both Egypt and Assyria as the enemies of Israel at whose hands the ruin of the Israelitish kingdom would be accomplished.

Now we might imagine that the prophets foresaw the downfall of the nation because of their political sagacity and foresight. But they themselves reiterate it that the message of doom which they have to deliver was given to them from the Lord God. They "saw" the nemesis of Israel in the visions of the Lord. This alone explains the assurance with which they delivered their unpopular message. Nevertheless we may allow that divine revelations do not come suddenly, like lightning flashes out of a fair sky. They are psycholog-

ically mediated. The soul must be put in a state of receptivity for them. Many anxious forebodings must have preceded the certainty of the nearing end of blood and terror. They were made strangely conscious that Israel was living on a volcano. And so they were finally compelled to pronounce the sentence of death upon their nation.

During the century and a half (750-586 B.C.), with the sword hanging over Samaria and Jerusalem, the passions of the people were whipped up and their feelings profoundly stirred. Hence, the strange contradictions, popular feelings swinging like a pendulum from one extreme to another. During the reign of Manasseh, the Host of Heaven, the Assyrian pantheon, was the object of worship, and Jehovah worship was under a ban. In the days of Josiah the idol-altars were destroyed, and even the non-idolatrous high-places around which the worshippers of Jehovah had rallied during the dark days of the interdict of Jehovah worship in the temple, were razed to the ground, and thus the temple at Jerusalem remained the one exclusive place of worship in the land. The revival in the days of Josiah was a Jewish "Protestant" Reformation. The prophet Jeremiah at that time preached the cessation of all ritual and sacrifice as a contrast to the glorification of ritual and sacrifice, which went even to the extent of the immolation of children and the sacrifice of chastity. On the one side were the king and the army. On the other side were the prophets as the embodiment of conscience, in opposition to the politics of force. Never before in history was such a demonstration of the revolutionary yet creative spirit of

Hebrew prophetism exhibited, daring to tear down the old and to plant the foundation of a new world, as was witnessed in the sad period before the downfall of Jerusalem. One personality of moral and spiritual greatness followed another. Amos handed on the torch of testimony to Hoseah. They were followed by Isaiah and Micah. And finally appeared the solitary, majestic figure of Jeremiah, the most Jesus-like personality in the history of the pre-Christian age.

History has a way of repeating itself. It certainly did so in the case of the Jewish people in the period culminating in the second destruction of Jerusalem under Titus in A.D. 70. For a long time the Jewish community, re-established after the Babylonian exile by the edict of the conqueror of Babylon, dragged on a hole and corner existence as a priest-state. But in the days of the Hasmonaeans, 142 B.C., it achieved a measure of political freedom and was able to extend to its ancient frontiers. The slumbering nationalism of the people re-awoke, only to suffer a fresh blow when the Roman Pompeius came in 63 B.C. and brought the people under the yoke of Roman militarism. Palestine lost its political standing once more and became an integral part of the Roman empire-republic. A century long the people bore the hated yoke with gnashed teeth, hoping for the Messiah. The Jewish soul, insulted by Roman inconsiderateness, finally broke out in open revolt and took up the unequal conflict with the might of Rome. Josephus has told us in detail how Jerusalem and the maddened nation came to a miserable end.

For a long time the Jewish people had been bereft of outstanding men. The reawakened national consciousness, accompanied by a remarkable rebirth of religious fervor, was guided by men who made history for the Jewish religion. But once again, under the influence of political disillusionment and the increasing pressure of the foreign yoke, we meet with striking contrasts. On the one hand a passionate devotion to the home-land by Zealots and Sicarii, leading to the extreme of self-mutilation. On the other hand, complete abstention from all politics under the hypnotism of a pseudo-apocalypticism. On the one hand, the cult of speculative philosophy, especially at Alexandria; on the other, severe literalism, leading to a complete absorption in the Mosaic Law. On the one hand, the glorification of the hierarchy; on the other, the simple lay religion revealed in the Gospels. Once again the religious genius of Judaism blossoms forth into beauty. John the Baptist, Jesus of Nazareth, Paul of Tarsus, are as much the culmination of the past religious history of the Jewish people, its glorious crown, as the beginning of a new religious era. Without their Jewish background, neither the Christ, nor His forerunner or His greatest apostle, are conceivable. But again, the Jewish people entered its death agony at the time of the expression of its richest spiritual life. The experience of the generation before the first exile was gone through once more by their descendants. New life has always been brought forth in the world and for the world as the fruit of pain and agony. Gethsemane and Calvary must precede the Easter morn.

III.

Interesting as it might be to draw conclusions for ourselves from the terrible double catastrophe, which befell the Jewish people, it is more important to learn what the inward thoughts of the prophets themselves, and later of our Lord, were with respect to the judgments which they foresaw as falling on the Jewish nation. They were more concerned with their own people than with the enemy. Not that they forgot the fact that the pagan conquerors were really more ungodly than the nation which they were raised up to chastise. Nahum, Habakkuk and Obadiah particularly stress this side. But the main emphasis was on the absolute necessity of the doom about to fall on the nation, in order that the true character of the God of Israel as more than a mere tribal Deity who was bound to take His people's side at all times, but as One exalted in righteousness, might be revealed. It might look that Israel's defeat was really the defeat of her God and the discomfiture of His cause. The prophets argued that the contrary was the case. He and His cause would triumph in the downfall of the sinful people. And history has fully justified their contention.

For the world-powers themselves would also come into judgment. Isaiah again and again points out the necessity of the final cutting down of the pride of Assyrian military pride. But in this there was no mere nationalistic cry for revenge. The moral order called for this judgment also for the vindication of Jehovah. The self-exaltation of the pagan victors would have to be humbled; while Zion would survive. It is true

that the outward Zion was destroyed; but the principles for which Zion stood, the divine intention concerning Zion, have survived. They are in the custody of the true church today. That church today builds on "the sure foundation and the precious corner stone" laid in Zion, as Israel will when the fulness of the times has come for her also. The fact is that the prophets of Israel were not interested in mere nationalism. Their concern was for the coming of the reign of God. This divinely produced concern obliged them to take an apparently unpatriotic attitude. Yet their deep affection for their people was made evident. Not one of the prophets of doom gave himself up to feelings of hopeless despair. The technical term employed by them: "the last days," the days of final consummation, of divine vindication and of the abasement of every hostile force, speaks of the new and more glorious dispensation for Israel, which would bring blessing to all the world. It was not the merely political exaltation of their nation the prophets cared for and sought after. They desired to see Jerusalem, the spiritual metropolis of the nations, converted to the religion of the God of Israel. They saw the arising of a catholic people of God from among the Gentiles and of a new world order, with renewed Israel as the heart thereof. In their visions of the return of David to be king in Israel, he is not spoken of as the conqueror of Israel's enemies in a military sense. The subjection of the Gentile world would be a divine act. He makes the enemies of the Messianic king to be the footstool of His feet. The greater David sits at His right hand in patience till this divine apocalypse of judgment is accomplished.

Then will the knowledge of Jehovah fill the earth as the waters cover the sea, and a warless world will come to birth.

IV.

The stricken people did not share the sublime faith and hopes of their spiritual leaders. The first effect of the exile is strikingly expressed in Psalm CXXXVII. The captives of Zion sat by the waters of Babylon utterly dejected, with their hearts filled with bitterness, and nursing the desire for cruel vengeance against Babylon and Edom. But other feelings in time supplanted the wild agony of the 137th Psalm. Penitence took the place of vengeance and lamentation. Instead of sitting on ashes for the desolations of Jerusalem, they sat in sackcloth over their sins which had brought on these desolations. The exile had for its signature, as far as the exercised remnant was concerned, only tears, fasting and confession of sin.

It is to these afflicted exiles that the message of Isaiah XL - LIV is directed. The prophet Isaiah, to whom the exile which is still going on was revealed, in his inaugural vision (Isa. VI.), also foresaw the end of this long ordeal of suffering, and so he addresses himself to the mourners for Zion. "Comfort ye, comfort ye, my people," says the divine voice. The last word concerning Jerusalem has not yet been spoken. Israel has a future. Let her believe in it and prepare for it. Suffering is the way to glory. Israel's exile is not only a divine judgment. It is also for the inner Israel, the remnant, true to Him amidst national defection, a

purifying discipline. And through martyrdom will this inner, spiritual Israel be trained for a world mission.

Prophecy reached its high water mark in the passages in which this vision is recorded. They are truly messianic. Only One could realize for the remnant of Israel its spiritual destiny. In the One who, as the Lamb of God, has become the channel of blessing to all nations, all that is noblest, highest, richest, most divine and heavenly in the Jewish people, from Abraham to the Exile, has found its personification and expression. In our Lord the Isaianic ideal of prophecy has become an actuality in history. And through Him shall a new Israel, expressing His character, yet become the miracle of divine grace. For Israel is declared to be "*Am Olam*," "the *everlasting* nation," and is "*still beloved for the father's sake*."

(This brief discussion is indebted to a lecture delivered by the late Prof. Hugo Gressmann of the *Institutum Judaicum*, Berlin University.)

Chapter III

THE BATTLEMENTS OF ZION

THE psalmist exhorts us to walk about Zion, the city of God which He establishes forever; to go round about her and count her towers, to mark well her bulwarks and to consider her palaces. And what we see in Zion we are to declare to generations yet unborn. (See Psalm XLVIII.)

This may have been inspired by the marvellous deliverance granted to Zion in the days of Isaiah, but it has a wider significance. Zion stands for all that Grace would set forth in Israel. True believers have indeed come to this Mount Zion (Heb. XII. 22) and bask in the sunshine of the divine favor that rests there. For the dew of Hermon descends upon it and there the Lord commandeth the blessing, even eternal life (Psalm CXXXIII).

Israel as an outward nation may still be sidetracked, blinded in part till the fulness of Gentile blessing has been brought in. But the true Israel lives on in her believing remnant according to the election of grace, and the Gentiles have come into their fellowship in Christ, fellow citizens of the Jerusalem which is above, the spiritual mother of all who are begotten of the Gospel of Christ. (See Gal. IV. 26).

The battlements of Zion stand unshaken by the ravages of time. God made no mistake in His choice of Israel. The chief advantage of being a Jew, argues the apostle Paul, is that he belongs to the nation which God selected to be the custodian of Divine Revelation (Rom. III. 1, 2). And spite of what modern scholarship avers, the charge that the records were tampered with remains an unproven hypothesis. Those who would disprove the validity of the ancient Scriptures bite into granite. As the outward Zion has been more frequently besieged, sacked and destroyed than any other city, yet has survived, so the true Zion, of which the outward is but a symbol.

Wonderful indeed is the story of Israel! The vast mass of human beings pass on without leaving any trace of their existence. They have made no contribution to life and thought. Occasionally a man arises who makes and marks history. So with nations. Mighty empires flourished and perished. They left hardly any footprints on the sands of time. But some nations were elect for great ends. Rising above their environment they became the teachers of the race. Such was little Hellas. But greater than she was Israel.

The Gentile world needs to remember where it got its choicest treasures from. The moral defences of modern life are Jewish in origin. Christendom is the battlefield between old pagan concepts and their resultant practice, and the divine principles of life and conduct first revealed to Israel. And the ancient battlements of Zion remain intact till today.

Let us take first of all, as fundamental, the being of God. That God is to be conceived as personal is a Jewish contribution. "In Judah is God known, and His Name is great in Israel." Outside Israel we meet with polytheism in the ancient world, or a philosophical pantheism. Both effectually deny the Divine personality. For where men conceive of gods many and of lords many, the heart fails to find a resting place in the love and friendship of a Living God, who enters into living relations with the mysterious personality of man made in His image and after His likeness for that very purpose. And pantheism, which makes God and nature synonymous, which reduces the term God to metaphysics, the end of an argument, leaves man in the depths of him an orphan, spite of the notion, that he too is a part of God. You cannot pray to, commune with, adore and rejoice in, a pantheistic proposition.

Under the inspired leadership of their prophets, and through mysterious discipline in the school of suffering, Israel came to see that her God was no tribal deity. Neither was He a mere philosophical abstraction, or metaphysical problem, or mystic dream. He was revealed in terms of personality. He had entered into the tenderest covenant relations with Israel, when He found the people friendless and oppressed. Jehovah could be communed with as a man speaketh with his friend. To bring this home to the imagination of the people the prophets had to employ anthropomorphic metaphors. We might almost speak of the Divine-Human God of Israel. The illuminated spokesmen for Jehovah did not teach a cold and reasoned out doctrine

of the divine unicity. They were "Enthusiasts for Jehovah."

Spite of many setbacks, the faith of Abraham and of the prophets became finally the faith of the people also. The family of Jacob practised idolatry in secret (Gen. XXXI. 30-35; XXXV. 2-4). The people carried about the images of their gods during the wilderness (Amos V. 26), Jehovah was often conceived of as a localized Deity (I Sam. XXVI. 19). Even Jacob was surprised to find that God dwelt as much at Bethel as at Beersheba (Gen. XXVIII. 16.) Hezekiah removed all the altars, not only the idolatrous high-places, but those dedicated to Jehovah, except the one altar at Jerusalem (II Kings VIII. 22); but his grandson Josiah had to do his work over again (II Kings XXIII). As a matter of fact the temple enjoyed the distinction of being the only centre of Jehovah worship about thirty years alone. The time came when the nation was taught through the destruction of the temple and its ritual that the religion of Jehovah did not depend on outward things. God was training men even then with the ideal in view afterwards presented in the New Jerusalem, a city without a temple. The Lord God Almighty and the Lamb, the all pervading presence, are the temple thereof.

How greatly is the world indebted to Israel for her emphasis on righteousness! There was no dividing wall in Israel between ethics and religion, as in pagan Greece. The personal character and behaviour of the worshipper matters everything to God, according to the Old Testament. The God of Israel cannot be

bribed or flattered by ritual or prayer. The religion of Greece and Rome never attained to such heights. The philosophers indeed magnified ethics, but they were branded as atheists, because they exposed the vices of the gods and goddesses of the Olympian Pantheon against which their moral sense revolted. How different the ethical holiness of the God of Israel! Salvation was of the Jews, because they knew what they worshipped. Worship in Israel was man's ethical response to God exalted in righteousness.

Another great thought was crystallized in the life of the ancient Hebrews: the elevation of family relationship. It is not too much to say that the unique family life of the Hebrews, as fostered by the holy religion revealed to them, alone suffices to stamp them a peculiar people. It is this which has given them the tremendous influence they have exerted in history.

It has been rightly observed that "with the Greeks and Romans the family stood second and the State first, but among the Hebrews the family was the basis of the nation's entire social and political life." In the fifth commandment the mother has her place along with the father as one to be honored. And what noble sons have come out of some of the humblest of Jewish homes! And how can we describe the hallowed influence of a Jewish Sabbath, introduced by the lighting of the sacred lamp, blessed by the mother of the family! From the beginning the religion of Israel was a family religion. The passover; their greatest annual celebration, was a family feast. The head of the household is the priest to the rest. Buffeted and despised, forced,

it may be, to eke out a mere existence by a humiliating occupation, the moment the Sabbath candles are lit, the Jew breathes a different atmosphere. He lifts up his head as a king and a priest. Care and anxiety fade away from his brow. He greets the Sabbath in the language of the Song of Songs. It is the home-coming of the loved Bride.

No wonder when throne and temple perished from Israel, when their national unity was broken up, they surveyed their unexampled calamities. They fell back on the family. The family existed before there was a nation and a congregation. It was their refuge when nation and congregation went down to ruin.

But Israel was yet further instructed by the Spirit of God. The prophets came to apprehend the tremendous worth of the individual. In the ancient world the individual counted for very little. The clan, the tribe, the state, was everything. The individual was born into a corporation, and his destinies were wrapped up with it. He might die, but the corporation lives on. But as the time of the exile drew near, the break up of every outward bond, the prophets of Israel made the discovery that God cares for the individual. The social group does not cause the individual to be forgotten. Thus did faith triumph over the tragedy of national debacle. Jehovah would be "a little sanctuary" to the lonely exile. Should the worst come to worst, the Israelite could exclaim: "Whom have I in heaven but Thee, and there is none upon earth I desire beside Thee. My heart and my flesh faileth, but God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever."

Thus did the spiritualisation of the religion of Israel grow apace. God cared for other things, it was perceived, than national prosperity, plentiful harvests, and earthly success. "There be many that say: Who will show us any good? Lord, lift Thou up the light of Thy countenance upon us. Thou hast put gladness in my heart, more than in the time when their corn and their wine increased!" (Psalm IV. 6, 7). The exile gave Israel a portable religion; that is a religion not dependent upon place and circumstance. The discovery of the spiritual worth of the individual, lent it a mystic inwardness.

There is another feature of Israel's uniqueness which we must not overlook: *the hallowing of history*. To the writers of the Old Testament history is more than the stringing together of separate events. There is a moral sequence. The ancient Hebrews were the first to give to the world a spiritual interpretation of history. It was not only that they perceived a divine plan gradually developing. They discovered the key to history to lie in personality. They saw that every crisis is the shadow of a man. There is a dispute recorded in the Talmud whether the times are adapted to the leader, or the leader to the times. Both always synchronise, as we know.

It has been pointed out that this is one of the most convincing proofs of the historical veracity of Holy Scripture. Such a personality as Abraham must have existed; or else how could we account for the phenomenon of Israel? There must have been such a leader as Moses, or how else could we account for the exodus

and the subsequent transformation of an undisciplined mob of slaves into a conquering nation? The monarchy involves the personality of David, and the final triumph of the ethical worship of the One God, the prophets, such outstanding personalities, like Amos, Isaiah, Jeremiah. And we challenge any other nation which according to its size has had a larger birth record of personalities than the nation of Israel.

Out of the unique history of Israel has grown the Messianic Hope. In this Israel stands absolutely alone among the nations of antiquity. The past for the Jew has been the history of redemption, whether of Abram out of Ur of the Chaldees, with its false civilization and its idolatry; or of his seed out of Egypt with its bitter bondage; and out of the wilderness with its wanderings and deprivations; and finally out of Babylon. But the greatest redemption was still to come. And to this golden future the pious Israelite was taught to turn his eye.

Chapter IV

THE MESSIANIC GIFT OF REST

ISRAEL has been spoken of as the people of the Messianic hope. Alone of all the nations of antiquity Israel has steadfastly looked forward to the fulfilment of a golden dream, the breaking forth of the Messianic age. This beautiful hope, which Israel has ever maintained, was originally inspired by God and it has been to Israel a lamp of consolation during her long night of sorrow.

In course of time ideas have become attached to this hope that confined the work of the looked for Messiah largely to mere political and economic improvements in the outward affairs of the suffering Jewish people. That the age of Messiah's reign would bring about such changes is clear; but the *material* benefits resulting from the coming of the anointed Son of David are not the most important. They are the by-products of His reign. If *the world within* is not brought into harmony and peace, the most pleasing set of circumstances in *the world without* would still leave the human heart hungry and dissatisfied. As the great law-giver Moses declared: "Man doth not live by (material) bread alone."

There has appeared in Israel One Who Said: "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." When those words were spoken the people were nationally in sore distress. Unjust taxation was a heavy burden. For the majority, the oppressive Roman yoke made life exceedingly difficult. No wonder revolt was in the air, which finally broke out in an open flame.

Jesus of Nazareth, the speaker of the words, was well aware of this condition of things. But He did not come with proposals of political change. He did not, like Bar Cochba, a century later, put Himself at the head of an army to drive the hated Roman out of the land and re-establish Jewish political independence. He offered to rest the heart crushed beneath its burdens. He proposed to make life buoyant and victorious for the weary children of Judah. He would be more than a political and military Messiah. That is why, when the 5,000 men would have taken Him by force to make Him a King, He refused their offer.

Sad and mysterious has been the long drawn-out tragedy of Israel's woes. Moses foretold it, as recorded in the book of Deuteronomy: that his people would become homeless wanderers among their enemies; that in their exile they would be given up to an anxious mind, eyes filled with vain longings, spirits that languished, lives spent in painful suspense (Deut. 28:65). And surely the scattered nation has been marked by these features during its long tossing to and fro among unfriendly nations. But the Messiah Jesus can meet this state. He can bring to pass a state of Sabbatic rest

in the human heart, whatever the outward conditions may be. He has the secret something for which the Jewish heart aches.

Twenty centuries have almost run their course since those words were spoken first. He is still speaking them. By His gentle Spirit Jesus is among us in healing grace and redeeming love. Well-nigh twenty centuries have proven Him to have the power to tranquilize men. The Messianic refreshment may be found on the one condition of coming to Him, of responding to His love call. Shall He call in vain?

Art thou wearied,
 Art thou languid,
 Art thou sore distressed?
 Come to Me, saith One, and coming,
 Be at rest.

Hath He marks that lead me to Him,
 If He be my guide?
 In His hands and feet are wound prints
 And His side.

If I trust Him, if I follow,
 Will He say me Nay?
 Not till earth, and not till heaven
 Flee away.

V

THE DESIRE OF ALL NATIONS

Haggai 2:7

THERE is very little doubt that the Messiah is meant by the term: "The desire of all nations," that is to say, the One whom the heart of all men unconsciously longs after. We have to interpret to men the nature of the mystic quest that leaves them for ever discontented, when they feel that the object of their sincere desire still lies beyond present attainments.

When Jesus was here, and his apostles proclaimed Him to the world as the "Anointed" and as "Lord," there were four representative nations. There was Rome, imperial Rome, with its desire for *power*. There was Greece, cultured Greece, with its desire for *wisdom*. There was Egypt, mystic Egypt, with its desire for *immortality*. And last, but not least, there was the Jewish people, that strange people, differing from all the rest, with its insatiable desire for *righteousness*.

Now we affirm that Jesus as the Messiah fulfils all these desires.

The longings of the human heart were perverted and misdirected by the crafty deceiver of mankind, the old serpent who beguiled and bewitched our first par-

ents in the garden of Eden. So Rome glorified political power, and militaristic power, the power that crushes all opposition by brute force.

But that is not the highest ideal. The power of love, of patience, of meekness, of gentleness, of purity, of stillness, of sacrifice, the kind of power which Jesus exhibited from the manger of Bethlehem to the altar of Calvary, that is the power *He* brought into the world.

Greece sought after wisdom, but imagined that the trained intellect could unravel the secrets of the universe and of the Beyond. It glorified the human mind, and the result was the various schools of philosophy which mutually destroyed each other's conclusions.

Now in the Incarnate Logos the Wisdom from on high is set forth. The children of Wisdom are the humble, broken, penitent God-seekers, who have come to see the glory of God in the Face of Jesus Christ, and who are made wiser thus than the philosophers of this wrangling world.

Egypt also had a perverted idea of immortality. It built pyramids to house the embalmed remains of their dead. But the true idea of immortality is not a mummy, but a redeemed man in whom the power of Christ's resurrection repeats its victory over death.

And what shall we say of Israel? Was not the idea of righteousness grossly perverted? Was it not sought in mere externalia? A conformity to rules and regulations may leave man a white-washed sepulchre, unless the grace of God works the miracle of the new creation

in his heart. Hence David prayed for a clean heart and a renewed *spirit*. Hence he confessed that God desired *truth in the inward parts*, and not a mere external correctness.

Now herein consists the very heart of Messiah's message to the Jew, as well as to the Gentile. He proposes to make good to him His Messianic title: "The Lord our righteousness," according to Jeremiah, and "the Sun of righteousness," according to Malachi. He becomes the fountain of righteousness to those who truly, penitently believe in His Name. *He died* for the putting away of our sin, and *He lives* to present His spotlessness to God on our behalf, that shining garment in which we are accepted, as the prodigal in the parable, when clothed with "the best robe," while at the same time, the indwelling Spirit imparts the very nature of Him who in His sinless humanity overcame all the seductions and wiles of the tempter.

Thus is He "the desire of all nations." Jew and Gentile may bring to Him their unfulfilled ideals, their unmet desires, their hunger and thirst, their hidden craving after a good which they can hardly put into words. He can still every ache and satisfy every want.

VI

WHY JESUS HAD TO BE A JEW

IT WAS necessary for the ultimate redemption of mankind that the Incarnation, the greatest event in history, should take place among the Jewish people.

Perhaps this might cause a smile of incredulity on some faces, to think that this most inconspicuous of all peoples of antiquity should have been chosen to give the Redeemer to the world. Were not Egypt, Babylon, India, Greece, Rome, mightier, wiser, and grander in every way than the Jews? What contributions did the latter make to science, art, philosophy?

I will give some of the reasons why God should have chosen Israel as the national mother of the promised Seed of the woman who should crush the head of the serpent.

(1) *Of all the nations of antiquity Israel alone had a true knowledge of God.* In the midst of pagan gloom God had kindled the lamp of faith in the family of Abraham. There was witness borne to the divine unity and to His ethical elevation. Now Jesus came to reveal this God — the God of the patriarchs, of Moses and the prophets, of the psalmists, the saints and sages

and seers of His people, and that in the terms of His unique personality.

(2) *The Jew had a true estimate of man.* In the midst of degradation, the enslavement of man by man, characteristic of a pagan state of society, the Jew saw that God recognized the worth and possibilities of the individual man as made in His image. Now Jesus came to regenerate this individual, to seek and to save that which was lost, because he is dear and precious to God.

(3) *The Jew had a sense of the supremacy of goodness,* as higher than might, and higher even than wisdom. Rome and Greece glorified these, but Israel put *righteousness* above them. Jesus came to live out that righteousness, and to make righteousness possible for those united to Him by faith.

(4) *The Jew alone had a spiritual philosophy of History.* The pagan world saw no goal, and therefore no progress, in historical movements. Things moved in vast cycles. But Israel saw that the whole process of history, often baffling and incomprehensible, often spelling tragedy, would end in "*the Day of the Lord*"—the kingdom of God, mediated by the Messiah, when the glory of God would cover the earth. This was the sublime hope of the prophets, which sustained them in days of trouble. Jesus has come to give effect to this undying hope that burnt in the heart of the Jew. He is "the Desire of all nations," and He will yet be at the top of everything and give peace to a traveling creation, as

He already gives when He reigns in the affections of a believing heart.

(5) *The Jewish people were trained to furnish the kind of a home in which the Messiah could be trained in heavenly wisdom.* The Law of Moses called for a home-life in Israel where *the Scriptures* were the chief topic of conversation from morn till night; where piety, purity, and the love of God created a heavenly atmosphere. Only in Israel could Jesus find such a home. The hallowing influence of the weekly Sabbath, the educational value of the annual feasts, all contributed to His mental and spiritual growth. So that He became in His human life the fulfilment of the Law and the Prophets, the finished product of the Old Testament, the kind of man God meant Israel to express.

(6) *The Jew was conscious of a divine mission to all the nations of the earth.* In one sense the Jews were the most exclusive of all nations, rigidly separated from other nations, in dress, food, speech and religion. But they dreamt of spiritual world-conquest. The faith of Abraham would yet be diffused among all nations, even though that faith was held only by "a very small remnant" of his descendants. That was the ancient dream, and Jesus came to bring that dream down from the clouds and make it a concrete reality, until every tongue has confessed Him Lord.

Through this Jesus, still ignored and refused by His own Jewish brethren, the Jew can alone fulfil His destiny to become the light of the world and a blessing to all the nations, even as the brethren of Joseph learned

that their rejected brother had become the Savior of Egypt from starvation, an earnest of what God had promised to Abraham, that through his seed all nations were to be blessed.

VII

WHAT SHALL WE DO WITH THE JEW IN OUR MIDST?

THOUSANDS of years have passed since the birth of the Hebrews into nationhood, and yet the world has not succeeded in discovering a satisfactory solution of "the Jewish problem." Every method that has been applied has failed. The problem remains as acute as ever, so that the nations are at their wits' end.

Now the Jew does not look the same to all alike. It all depends on the eyes of the beholder. Not a few suffer from blurred vision, and then impute to the Jew the distorted image of their diseased eyesight. There are at least four conceptions of the Jew in people's minds.

(1) *The Jew a Liability*

That is how the unregenerate non-Jew is apt to feel about the Jewish people. The sea-monster who had the run-away prophet in his belly, felt that he was a liability to be got rid of. And that is what the governments who have come under the influence of an anti-Jewish ideology are planning for the Jew. It is well to remember the shrewd observation of Talleyrand, the statesman attached to Napoleon: "Every country has the Jew it deserves." If there has been an *economic*

Jewish problem here and there the nations have themselves to blame for it. Even as late as in the days of Josephus, the Jewish people were farmers, cattle-breeders, shepherds, vine-dressers, as that historian declared in his book: "Contra Apion." The Canaanite remnant, dispossessed of their lands, was driven to merchandizing for a living. Indeed the very word "Canaanite" does duty for "merchant" in the Hebrew of the Old Testament. As the exiled Jew was afterwards forbidden to till the soil; and shut out of honorable means of gaining his livelihood, he had to fall back on his wits to be able to exist in an unfriendly world.

(2) *The Jew an Asset*

When the whole case of the Jew in the lands of his dispersion is fairly examined, it will be found that the Jew has been more of an asset than a liability. Wherever the Jew has had a fair opportunity, commerce and industries have flourished. The nations who have been just to the Jew have been benefited by his presence. Jacob may have used sharp means to get his own out of that unscrupulous Syrian, Laban, who changed his wages ten times in six years; but even then, Jacob was the means of enriching Laban (Gen. 30:29, 30). We might even speak of other than material contributions the Jew has made to our modern life. He has no need to be ashamed of his record in the realm of literature, philosophy, science, art, music, poetry. But we do not wish to dwell on that at length. The fact is the Jew is prone to be conceited over his achievements in these directions. The difference between the *inspired* literature of the Old Testament and the *uninspired* liter-

ature of the Jews lies mainly in this: The Scriptures hold up a faithful mirror before the Jew in which he can see his sins. The secular books and magazines from Jewish pens are painfully self-congratulatory. But that again is the psychological reaction to the attempt of the nations to put an inferiority complex on the Jew, which he feels he has valid reasons to refuse.

(3) *The Jew a Mystery*

All said and done the Jew remains a "mystery" to the natural mind. To interpret this mystery is one of the functions of the minister of Christ, as a steward to dispense the mysteries of God (I Cor. 4:1). The Greek word "mysterion" conveyed originally the idea of a state secret. There are several such secrets in the Kingdom of God, and they are understood only by those who have been initiated. Thus there is more in the Jew than appears on the surface. The very existence of the Jew—like the bramble of the desert, burning but not consumed—is a mystery. Has not God demonstrated both *miracle* and *prophecy* in this people? Modernism denies both; but as long as the Jew continues modernism is rebuked. This is the people out of whom the Scriptures have come, that book unlike any other book, as Israel is the people unlike any other people. And from that people, according to the flesh, has come the Man unlike any other man. And of this people is predicted a future which will justify its divine election and its long preservation down the avenues of time. Grace will have the last word in the controversy with Jewish unbelief.

The Gospels contain two prophetic utterances concerning the Jewish nation, one made soon after the birth of the Messiah, the other on the eve of His death. The first was made by the aged Simeon, that Spirit-guided and Spirit-taught Jew, when he held the blessed Babe of Bethlehem in his arms, declaring Him to be not only "a light to lighten the Gentiles," but also "the glory" of God's people Israel (Luke 2). That word can never be cancelled. Some day He will indeed be Israel's glory, not as now, by the very fact of His having been born of Israel, thus making Israel glorious in spite of her present humiliation; but as the One whom Israel will hail as her noblest son, her "first-born" and her "only son," her other sons not worthy of being mentioned in comparison with Him (Zech. 12).

The other prophecy was made by Caiphas in his capacity of anointed high priest, just as the Aaronic priesthood was about to pass away. He prophesied that Jesus should *die for that nation*, as well as "gather together the children of God scattered abroad" (John 11:51, 52). The Jewish nation is preserved from extinction, and her future glory also is assured by the death of Christ, just as that Cross is the secret of the mystic fellowship and the unbreakable oneness of the world-wide family of God. Thus God has transformed the greatest crime into the greatest good. Truly we are face to face with a great mystery here. The mystery of the church in her essential unity, spite of outward divisions, and the mystery of the deathless life of Israel, spite of her appearance, as "dry bones" scattered among the Gentiles.

(4) *The Jew an Opportunity*

But there is more to say. This is our day of opportunity as far as the evangelization of the Jew is concerned. There never has been such a day. The very rising tide of hatred against him is but the strange method the Messiah uses to bring the Jew to Himself. God is certainly doing a new thing today. With few exceptions the Christian approach to the Jew in past generations, has reached "the poor of the flock" only. But now many of the hitherto unreached upper strata of Jewry are becoming tender towards the blessed Name of Jesus. Driven out, stripped and humiliated, many of them are finding their way to His feet. Did not God use the famine and the "rough" treatment by Joseph, the cup being found in innocent Benjamin's sack, to wring from his brethren the confession: "We are verily guilty concerning our brother"? History is repeating itself today. Behind so-called "Anti-Semitism" are sinister forces inspired by the Prince of darkness. But above Satan is God, "who worketh all things according to the counsel of His own will."

As the enemy is stirring up trouble for the Jew, the Lord is raising up friends. There are Gentile believers who have a glowing affection for God's suffering Israel. "The time to favor Zion" is declared by the Psalmist to be near, when God's servants love "*the stones*" and favor "*the dust*" of that ruined city. Many will love Zion when she is restored, when the Lord will have made her "the perfection of beauty" and "the joy of the whole earth." But to love her in her present degradation is the fruit of grace. And that is what we see taking place today.

Twenty-six years ago "the Hebrew Christian Alliance" was formed in New York City. It was a risky step, and many said: "What do these feeble Jews . . . will they revive the stones out of the heaps of the rubbish?" (Neh. 4:2). Many foresaw a speedy end to this enterprise. But God has watched over it. "Every plant which my heavenly Father hath not planted shall be rooted up," said our Lord. But in spite of difficulties and tests, the work has gone on, and has spread out to other lands. It is the beginning of a movement which will, I trust, lead to the setting up again of the lamp of testimony *inside* Jewry, and which will, by conserving the fruits of Christian labor among the Jews, demonstrate that there is "at this present time also a remnant according to the election of grace" (Rom. 11:5).

I would earnestly implore God's praying people in the churches to pray for this rapidly increasing remnant, that it may be spiritually-minded, purified and sanctified, a people in whom the grace of God has succeeded in reaching its end.

PART TWO

JUDAISM and CHRISTIANITY
Agreement and Differences

VIII

THE DOCTRINE OF GOD

BOTH Jews and Christians confess before the world their faith in one God. He is to them one Creator, Preserver and final Judge of men.

Moreover, both Jews and Christians confess the ethical quality of the divine nature. He is righteous and loveth righteousness. He expects His people to pattern their lives on His attitude towards good and evil; to love the good and to hate the evil.

These are tremendous truths — fundamental to a true conception of God — and Jews and Christians are in hearty agreement respecting them.

However, modern Jews and Christians tread different paths as to some important aspects of this great theme. To the Judaism of today, God is largely a proposition, a point of metaphysical speculation. Hence, Jews are fond of speaking of their God-idea as that of an “ethical monotheism.” There is no warmth, no tenderness, no heart, in this form of speech. When we turn to the Old Testament we find something very different. Men were *enthusiasts for Jehovah*. He is over and over again presented in anthropomorphic

terms. He feels and acts like man; in all our afflictions He is afflicted; He shares our joys and our sorrows; He walks with us in sympathetic love. No wonder that He becomes the fountain of "exceeding joy" to His worshippers! To see His countenance is to them the acme of blessedness; His frown spells unhappiness and wretchedness. In His favor alone is true life.

Moreover, instead of a philosophical *unicity*, the Old Testament indicates that there is in God a richer inner self-consciousness, making room for the more developed doctrine of the *Tri-unity* of the New Testament. Thus the triune divine blessing Jacob invoked on the sons of Joseph (Gen. 48:15, 16); the triune benediction of the priests in Numbers 6:22-27; the Trisagion of the seraphim (Is. 6:3); and the wonderful tri-unity in the mission of the Messiah: "I," "the Lord God" and "His Spirit," in Isaiah 48:16. The God of modern Judaism remains ever lonely in His unapproachable spirituality and super-worldly majesty. If the sum total of the self-revelation of God in the Old Testament is "*Love*," as "*Love*" is the summing up of the Law and the Prophets, then there must have been in the Godhead One Beloved before ever a creature existed, and the Spirit of Love between both, in other words, a trinity. Judaism is blind to this. But to a Christian it is the light of divine revelation in which he walks by faith, till faith is merged into sight at last.

If we enquire into the causes of this divergence from the original God-concept in Israel on the part of modern, so-called "liberal" Judaism, we must take into ac-

count the influence of two Jewish philosophers, Spinoza and Mendelsohn. Spinoza has given to modern Judaism its *pantheistic* tendency, and Mendelsohn its *deism*. The "Sh'ma," "Hear O Israel, Jehovah thy God is one Jehovah," is interpreted by the disciples of Spinoza to mean that "The Being," i.e., the universal life-force, is Israel's God. The disciples of Mendelsohn, on the other hand, emphasize the divine transcendence, God being the unapproachable, the exalted One, far above the world. The well-known Cincinnati rabbi Kohler, endeavored to combine both concepts in his doctrine of God: "For the modern seeker in the sphere of religion, the emphasis of religion lies in the doctrine of man—in anthropology. Man with his homesickness for heaven, with his highest urge, beholds with Isaiah the fringe of the divine glory. He seeks and finds that God is *above* him while he is aware of Him as *within*. He must, of course, pass through all the steps between, till through *self-knowledge* he arrives at the knowledge of *God!*"

Is this the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob? Or are not these words mere phrases tinged with religious philosophy, but devoid of power and life, such as a bruised and broken human heart seeking reality cries out for?

The Christian God-idea is rooted in the revelation which was granted to ancient Israel. Modern Judaism is a departure therefrom. It is in the face of Jesus Christ we see the effulgence of the glory of God. He is the goal of the divine outshining when the God of glory appeared to Abraham.

As it has been aptly said: "In the Old Testament we see God in profile. In the New Testament, in the person of the incarnate Son, we see God face to face."

IX

THE DOCTRINE OF MAN

THE concept of God as a Personality, sustaining personal relations with His creature-man, implies the doctrine of man as also a personality. Here Jews and Christians are in hearty agreement. Indeed the Christian idea of man has been taken over as one of the choicest gifts of ancient Israel to her spiritual daughter, the Christian Church. That man is made in the image, and after the likeness of God, in his creature status, is written in the Hebrew Scriptures. The Lord God has breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, to constitute him a living soul, i.e., a personality, to hold communion with the Personality of God. God is Spirit and man is a spiritual being. If God is "the living God," man is "a living soul."

The Christian cherishes as one of the greatest contributions of the Old Testament, the truth that God is the God of the individual. Each separate human being is a microcosm of the macrocosm, i.e. the universe, and God is at work in that world, as in the world without, with deepest solicitude. So God concentrates on the individual. He cultivates the individual. No one is forgotten or overlooked or passed by by God. He links His Name with those of individuals, so that He

loved to be called "the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob." Not that these men had a monopoly on God; they were selected as samples of how God takes up for blessing the individual man; for the divine purpose is that through them "all the families of the earth" were to be blessed, literally, desire to obtain their blessedness. This is the very heart of the Book of Genesis.

That it matters to God what kind of an individual man is; that the individual human being is not a means to an end, to be exploited, say, by the state, according to the ideology of totalitarianism, but an end in himself, having an infinite worth to God, and undreamt of possibilities in his inner endowments, if they are only at God's disposal, are truths which have enriched the religious thinking and feelings of Christians today, as they have of Jews in generations past.

But when we look further into this matter we find that unfortunately Jews and Christians have diverged, and that fundamentally, with respect to the doctrine of man. The modern Jew maintains that not only is every man born without sin, but that the Jew is especially born with a tendency to righteousness. The Christian, on the other hand, confesses that every man inherits the consequences of the Fall of our first parents, and must needs experience a *new birth* if he would have to say to God and enter His Kingdom; that man is naturally *sinful* and requires a Mediator with God, a Divine-Human Redeemer. Has not modern Judaism rather gone in the way of the religion of Cain? Cain refused to bring the sacrifice which spoke

of the penalty of death resting on man being laid on an unblemished substitute. He denied that he was implicated in Adam's fall and rejected the God-appointed way of approach to Him by the sacrificial death of "the firstling of the flock," a type of the Redeemer who was to come.

Jews imagine that man, in his unregenerate state, can deserve the divine favor. Christians disclaim all personal deserts and merits, and come empty-handed to receive God's free gift of grace.

Jews teach that forgiveness of sins depends on the changed character of the sinner. Christians teach that God offers a free and full pardon to every repenting believer, and imparts His Spirit to produce a changed life when that forgiveness is received by the sinner coming just as he is without one plea.

These are fundamental differences between the Jewish Synagogue and the Christian Church. Here lies the crux of the divine controversy with Israel. The Hebrew-Christian Paul understood his people thoroughly when he said: "They go about to establish their own righteousness" and "have not submitted themselves to the righteousness of God." They dream that they can present to God, as the ground of their acceptance, a righteousness of their own manufacture, instead of taking the place which Job had to take, when emptied out of his vehement self-vindication he exclaimed: "I repent, and abhor myself in dust and ashes," thus casting himself on divine grace alone.

In closing let me point out how the chosen saints of ancient Israel felt about this matter. The deeper their knowledge of God, and the closer their communion with Him, the more intense their *penitence* in His holy presence. All the godly men of the Old Testament felt their personal unfitness to stand in the light of the divine glory, like Isaiah, when he cried out: "Woe is me, for I am undone, for mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts, for I am a man of unclean lips," a leper, who had to cover his lips and cry: "unclean, unclean!" But it was *then* that he experienced the purging of his sin by the application of altar-fire. And in this he prefigures Israel's future conversion from a religion of self-righteousness to the confession of the Messiah as "Jehovah Tzidkenu," "the Lord our Righteousness," as Jeremiah foretold, to exclaim in the language of Isaiah: "In the Lord have I righteousness and strength."

X

THE DOCTRINE OF THE SCRIPTURES

JEWES and Christians alike confess that God has spoken to man by means of the Holy Scriptures. Thankfully do Christians acknowledge with the apostle Paul, that the chief advantage of being Jews is that to them were committed the oracles of God. The Law, the Psalms, the Prophets, known as the *T'Nach* by the Synagogue, came, as far as human mediation is concerned, out of the heart of Israel. No other nation could have given us such a book! For no other nation was trained, disciplined and guided like Israel to be the chosen penman and custodian of the divine self-revelation in literature. Israel had to pass through strange and humiliating experiences to meet with God in the depths, and then share her discovery with the rest of mankind. She has thus paid a great price for this privilege of being the medium of God's written revelation.

And, if my Jewish friend reading these lines will allow me to say, the New Testament is also written by Jewish hands. The apostles and their associates were Jews. Perhaps the two Lukan writings are an exception. But there are scholars who stoutly maintain that

he too was an Hebrew racially, along with the other writers of the New Testament.

Anyway Church and Synagogue agree that we have in the so-called "*Old Testament*" the very words of the living God, absolutely reliable, not antiquated, but conveying an abiding message to generations yet unborn.

I am not unaware that the spirit of rationalism has attacked the veracity of the ancient Scriptures, and so-called "liberal" Judaism has capitulated to the modern critical aspersions passed on their own, once "holy" Book. But in the light of a sounder scholarship, both Jewish and Christian, and of archaeological discoveries in recent years, we can fearlessly apply to the Scriptures the language of the prophet Isaiah: "No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper, and every tongue that shall rise against thee in judgment thou wilt condemn." Criticism passed on the critics has vindicated our holy Book in every part.

Whatever may have been the failure of Israel to live up to her divinely chosen vocation, she has been a trustworthy custodian of the oracles of God. God made no mistake in appointing her to this high office.

But now we must note some differences which have separated the Church and the synagogue in their respective attitude toward the Bible.

To the orthodox Synagogue the various books of the T'Nach are of unequal value. The *Law* is indeed ac-

cepted as immutable and supreme. Above all other writers towers the gigantic figure of Moses. But while the other parts of the Scriptures are also allowed to be inspired, they are so in a lesser degree.

There is also another very serious difference. The *oral* law is considered to have equal authority with the *written* law. The theory is that when God put of the Spirit resting on Moses on the seventy elders of Israel, they became the depositaries of the *spoken* or *unwritten* law of God into which they initiated others who were selected to fill the gaps caused by death. So that there were always seventy elders who were in the secret of these divine communications, verbally passed on from generation to generation. When the unity of the nation was in danger of being broken up, at the time of the last destruction of Jerusalem, these verbal communications were written down, lest they be forgotten. This is the origin of the *Mishnah* commented on in the *Gemarah*, being better known as the *Talmud*. To an orthodox Jew there is no appeal from the authority of these traditions which were finally committed to writing. And it was to these Jesus referred when He said to the Jewish people: "Ye have made the Word of God of none effect through your tradition."

Much lip devotion is offered to the Scriptures by orthodox Jews. After the Babylonian exile there grew up an increasing reverence to the Law, which was indeed commendable, as the books of Ezra and Nehemiah record. But after the voice of prophecy had ceased in Israel, and the learned scribe and doctor of the law had

taken the place of the anointed prophet speaking directly from the mouth of the Eternal, orthodox Judaism became largely a *Book-religion*, which we might call "Biblicism." So Jesus told the leaders of Judaism, they searched the Scriptures, because *in them* they thought to find eternal life. They had become an end in themselves, instead of a means, i.e. pointing to Him who is the fountain of life to believers (See John V. 39, 40 Revised Version) . For the Scriptures held sacred by Israel testify of Him, and were given to bring us to His blessed feet.

Now while Christianity is not a religion *of* a book, it is a religion *with* a book. It is pre-eminently the religion of a *Person*. When the Lord opened His public ministry in the synagogue of Nazareth, according to the evangelist Luke, He read the Messianic manifesto found in Isaiah LXVI, and then He closed *the Book* and sat down, and the eyes of all were fastened upon *Him*. He confirmed the testimony of the Book concerning Himself, but added: "This day is this Scripture fulfilled." In Him we have more than the Book. In Him we have the Book fulfilled. And here lies the great difference between the Jew and the Christian.

The New Testament claims to be the divine key to unlock the otherwise mysterious Old Testament. Without this key the Old Testament remains an enigma. Both parts of our holy Book, Scripture and Key, are thus thankfully received by the Christian believer. In the light of Christ the ancient Scriptures of Israel are

lit up with a strange, new glory. His radiant Face is seen reflected in them. And blessed are they whose eyes are opened to behold it!

XI

THE DOCTRINE OF THE MESSIAH

THE messianic hope is shared alike by Synagogue and Church. The very word “Christian” is the equivalent of the word “Messianic”; “Christ” being the anglicised form of the Greek word “Christos,” the translation of the Hebrew word “Messiah,” which means “Anointed.”

Ancient Israel was taught to look for the perfect Messiah, the anointed prophet, priest and King, as the prophets of Israel were but imperfect interpreters of the mind of God; the priests broke down sadly, as seen in the corruption of the house of Eli; and the kings could not “save” Israel from the calamity of the exile.

The anointed king in Israel stood *officially* in the relationship of *sonship* with Jehovah (2 Sam. VII:14); the prophetic second Psalm taking up this idea as foreshadowing the *real* sonship of the Messiah of the end-time, to whom the uttermost parts of the earth are given for a possession (Ps. II:7-9; see also Ps. LXXXIX:-27-30).

Both in ancient Israel and in the church today, the doctrine of the Messiah is central — in Israel as a Hope, in the Church as a fulfillment.

But modern Jews have turned from the ancient Hope of their fathers and therefore are unable to see its fulfillment in Jesus of Nazareth. Their Messiah-idea has degenerated to the expectation of a political and military emancipator, patterned on the heroic Judas Maccabeus, as was illustrated in the history of Bar Cochba, who attempted to be that Kind of a Messiah. The roots of this fatal misconception may be traced to the days of Samuel when they clamored for a king like the kings of the Gentiles, and gave up practically the Kingship of Jehovah, which would be fully realized in His Anointed, the Incarnate Son of God, as Psalm II reveals.

The vision given to Daniel showed him the Son of Man coming in the clouds of heaven (Dan. VII:13) to supplant with His reign the "beast"—kingdoms that have crushed down the nation of Israel so long. In other words the Messiah is a heavenly Being, and His kingdom is not set up by the force of the sword, like the kingdoms of this world.

Israel is *par excellence* the people with the forward look. History was to the ancients of this people the working out of a divine purpose, working out through earthly events the divine goal, "the day of Jehovah," to be ministered by a scion of the house of David, when the knowledge of Jehovah would cover the earth as the waters cover the sea. Modern Jews have largely abandoned this noble expectation, while orthodox Jews, who still cling to the hope of Messiah's appearance, have inherited from the leaders of post-exilic Judaism a false concept of His personality and work.

The highest peak of Messianic prophecy was reached by the prophet who delineated the features of the ideal Servant of Jehovah in Isaiah 40 to 53. That the Messiah is meant by that delineation is evident from the language used in chap. 52:13-15 concerning the glory of the humbled Servant, so that kings shall shut their mouths at Him; "He shall be exalted and lifted up, and shall be very high." Modern Jews snatch at this vision as foretelling their own future greatness! But it is evident that the words following in chap. 53 gave us prophetically the penitential confessions of the Israel of the end-time when they reflect on their long unbelief in and rejection of Him who was indeed the Man of God's selection, but in whom they saw no beauty that they might desire Him. The ancient synagogue saw the sufferings and glories of the Messiah in this great Scripture, but today it is not so much as read in the regular readings of the Scriptures on the Sabbath services in the synagogue, and, when referred to at all, applied to the Jewish people, of whom it is indeed a stretch of imagination to say that when afflicted they, lamb-like, opened not their mouth!

The teaching of the Jewish Scriptures is that suffering is ever the path to power. Thus Joseph was brought out of his dungeon; Moses out of the desert; David out of the cave of Adullam; while the Messiah reaches His throne by way of the Cross. His brightest glory is that of sacrifice, not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for many.

The divine controversy with the Jewish people has to do mainly with two matters: (1) The ground

of acceptance with God; is it by a humanly produced righteousness, or by submitting to the justifying grace of God? (2) The Messiah; is He a political hero, or is His brightest glory a sacrificial lamb?

The four songs imbedded in chaps. 42 to 53 in the book of Isaiah present a Messianic Figure very different to the popular idea which grew up among the Jews when direct revelation ceased and tradition and rabbinical glosses took its place. The sublime delineation of the Suffering Servant of Jehovah, whose exaltation and world-wide ministry of blessing are based on His sacrifice in Isaiah; the Smitten Shepherd, the Man who is Jehovah's Fellow in Zechariah, receded into the background, and a military leader took their place.

The explanation is the life and death struggle of the Jewish community with Hellenism, and the resultant Maccabean uprising. The experiment to set up a holy community in the midst of pagan darkness and corruption was endangered by the forcible imposition of that form of culture known as Hellenism. It threatened to strangle to death the testimony to Jehovah, to His unity, and to the purity of His ethical requirements. All honor to those Jewish men and women who sacrificed their lives in defense of the truth. But the remarkable success of the military uprising under the leadership of the Maccabees, went like wine into the heads of the people. It gave them an inflated idea of their nationalism. The coming Messiah had to be another Judas Maccabeus, only on a larger scale. The Prophet, the

Mediator-Priest, the King who is the loving Shepherd of His people, slain for His flock, as Zechariah points out, gave place to the Hero, the Super-Man, the Conqueror with the material sword in His hand.

The tragedy of the Jewish people is the fatal choice they made when they preferred Barabbas to Jesus. They are confirming this fatal choice to their own undoing till our day.

XII

THE DOCTRINE OF THE INCARNATION

JEWES and Christians alike confess that "Salvation is of the Lord." Hence the Scriptures of the ancient people of God looked for a *divine* intervention both in judgment and in mercy, which would terminate the long drawn out reign of evil. The prophets called this coming divine event: "The Day of Jehovah." God Himself was seen as coming to vindicate His Name, establish His glory, and claim His rights. Jerusalem is called upon to publish these good tidings and to "say to the cities of Judah: Behold your God!" (Isaiah XL: 9). For, "Behold, the Lord God will come with strong hand and His arm will rule for Him and His work before Him. He shall feed His flock like a Shepherd . . ." (Isaiah XL: 10, 11). Especially full of this Hope are the Psalms. So Psalm XCVI: 11-13: "Let the heavens rejoice, and let the earth be glad; let the sea roar and the fulness thereof. Let the field be joyful and all that is therein: then let all the trees of the wood rejoice before Jehovah: for He cometh, He cometh to judge (i. e. to righten) the earth: He shall judge the world with righteousness, and the peoples with His truth." And so many other Psalms.

Again Jews and Christians are of one mind in the acceptance of the promise that *a Man* was to appear in whom all these wonderful things would be realized, even "the Seed of Woman," "the Seed of Abraham," through whom all nations would be blessed, the "Shiloh," who is the Lion of Judah, etc. Thus Isaiah XI: 1-10 R.V.:

"There shall come forth a shoot out of the stock of Jesse, and a branch out of his roots shall bear fruit. And the Spirit of Jehovah shall rest upon Him . . . With righteousness shall He judge the poor, and decide with equity for the meek of the earth; and He shall smite the earth with the rod of His mouth; and with the breath of His lips shall He stay the wicked . . . And the wolf shall dwell with the lamb . . . for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of Jehovah, as the waters cover the sea. And it shall come to pass in that day, that the root of Jesse that standeth for an ensign of the peoples, unto Him shall the nations seek, and His resting place shall be glorious."

And also Isaiah XXXII: 1, 2 R. V.:

"Behold, a King shall reign in righteousness, and princes shall reign in justice. And *a MAN* shall be as a hiding place from the wind, and a covert from the tempest, as streams of water in a dry place, as the shade of a great Rock in a weary land."

But Jews and Christians, while accepting both sets of prophetic visions, part company when it is confessed that they are harmonized in Jesus, the One in whom

God and Man are united in one. One of the chief stumbling stones before Jews enquiring into the truth of Christianity is the doctrine of the Incarnation. In the middle ages particularly, Jewish antagonism against this Christian message stressed this as an insuperable obstacle to faith. This was doubtless due to the one sided presentation of the truth by the theologians of that day. They stressed the Deity of the Messiah and overlooked His humanity.

When Jews read of Jesus being weary or hungry or praying to the Father, they naturally asked: Is God tired, hungry, or does God pray to Himself? Or can God die on a cross?

The early church had to face this difficulty. So sure was the first generation of Christians of the divine glory of their adorable Lord that it was sometimes found hard to believe that His humanity which suffered here below was actual and real. The first heretics, like Cerinthus, attacked not the Divinity, but the humanity of the Lord Jesus. They denied that "Jesus Christ *is come in the flesh.*" They asserted that His human life on earth was only a mask, which He has now laid aside; that He never was a true man. That God became Man is the central truth of the Christian evangel. Not that God dwelt more fully in a certain man than in others, as Socinians and Unitarians declare; not that the Divinity was humanized and the Humanity deified, as some modern cults, rooted in Pantheism, imagine; but rather, that in the Christ, God is presented to man, and Man is presented to God. In Him we see the glory of God, and in Him God sees His reflection in Man.

Very God of very God, is He, and very Man of very Man, in one undivided Person. This is "the mystery of godliness, God manifest in the flesh." There have been many *manifestations* of God—in Abraham, Moses, and the prophets. But Jesus is more. He is "God *manifest*."

And here the Hebrew Scriptures prepare us to receive this great truth. That God would reveal His Face was the great hope of the God-seekers in Israel. His glory would one day be revealed and all flesh would see it together (Isaiah XL). But how can that be? God had declared to Moses: "Thou canst not see My face; for man shall not see me and live" (Exodus XXXIII: 20). And yet it is recorded that men have seen *God face to face*, as the patriarch Jacob declared, when "there wrestled *a Man* with him till the breaking of the day" (Genesis XXXIII). Is not the story of Jacob at Peniel a rehearsal in one child of Abraham of the yet future experience of the people sprung from him, of their eventual recognition of the long rejected truth of the Incarnation, the God-Man-Messiah? Then will the day indeed break on Israel.

The Virgin Birth

Closely connected with the Incarnation is the miracle of the Virgin-Birth. If the Messiah be indeed the Redeemer of men, He must be personally free from the taint of sin in His human nature. Hence His generation had to be of the Holy Spirit, and not of sinful seed like fallen man.

The primeval announcement of the Conqueror of evil as "the Seed of the Woman" involves the necessity

of the Virgin-Birth. It was declared by Isaiah to be Jehovah's "*Sign*" (Isaiah VII: 11-14). The Hebrew word for "Sign," the first and the last letters of the Hebrew alphabet, joined by the letter which means "and," is referred to in Genesis 1:14, where the stars are spoken of as for "Signs," as well as for seasons and for days and years. In Jeremiah X: 2 the word is found with the significance of *portents*, or *things to come*. And it is not without significance that one of the great *signs of the Zodiac* was understood since most ancient times to be *the Virgin and her child!* Surely, that conception must have been a relic of a primeval revelation of the teaching of the stellar signs.

This is the sign still spoken against by the Jewish people (Luke II: 34) as the aged Simeon foretold. And, therefore, there is another sign given to them, as the rejected Messiah said: "This is an evil generation: they seek a sign; and there shall no sign be given it, but the sign of Jonas the prophet. For as Jonas was a sign unto the Ninevites, so shall also the Son of Man be to this generation" (Luke XI: 29, 30). The Jewish people are beholding this sign today; Christ, risen from the dead, preaching to the Gentiles! The Gentiles repenting under preaching which leaves them still impenitent. And this impenitence will continue till they see yet another "sign," when beholding in their hour of tribulation the "signs in sun and moon and stars; and upon the earth distress of nations, in perplexity for the roaring of the sea and the billows; men fainting for fear, and for expectation of the things which are coming on the world; for the powers of the heaven shall be shaken" (Luke XXI: 25, 26).

For “then shall appear *the sign of the Son of Man in heaven*, and then shall all the tribes of the earth (or land) mourn, and they shall see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory” (Matthew XXIV: 30).

It is the hour of Israel’s conversion when they will look upon Him whom they have pierced and whose wounds have opened a fountain of healing and cleansing for repenting believers. But then will regenerated and sanctified Israel become in turn God’s great sign to all the nations. Their conversion will be “to Jehovah a name; *an everlasting sign* that shall not be cut off” (Isaiah lv. 13).

XIII

THE DOCTRINE OF SIN

I

BOTH Jews and Christians are agreed that it matters to God what kind of men and women we are: that we are accountable for our actions to Him; and that there is such a thing as SIN, which is the disturber of the relationship of harmony which should exist between God and man.

The ancient pagan world has a much lower view of sin than that set forth by the Old Testament. In fact *ethics* were not a necessary part of *religion*. The philosophical schools of Greece had their ethical systems, but then the philosophers were largely pantheists in their repudiation of the absurdities of polytheism. Religion and ethics belonged to two different departments in the world outside ancient Israel. In Israel sin was an offense committed by a spiritual being, responsible to the God in whose image he was created, against the divine holiness and love. Sin is the breach of the order imposed by God on His moral universe, which is governed by the law of inflexible righteousness from top to bottom, bringing confusion and suffering into that order. With ancient Israel sin was no

mere "complex": certainly not "the delusion of the mortal mind," but a terrible evil having eternal consequences. It was "*Pesha*," i.e., transgression; "*Chattah*," i.e., missing the mark; it was "*aven*," i.e., iniquity, which is another way of spelling inequity. See Psalm XXXII 1, 2. Both Jews and Christians bow before the authority of the Old Testament in this solemn matter.

II

Sin and Sins in Rabbinical Judaism

Since the destruction of Jerusalem there has come to pass a change of attitude towards the problem of sin in Judaism. Talmudical Jews are oblivious to the difference between *sin* as an inworking malady, and *sins* as the outward symptoms of that fatal disease. Thus if a man breaks a commandment he makes himself a transgressor. But if he has the intention only of keeping it, he has laid up merit, he has performed what is called a *mizwa*. But the intention to commit an evil deed is not called "transgression." The evil intention arising out of the abyss of corruption in fallen human nature is not recognized as worthy of judgment. He who keeps all the commandments, actually or in intention, is a *Zaddik*, i.e., a righteous man. However, it is admitted that the number of those who are *Zaddikim* in this way is small, so that the majority of mankind are in danger of perishing. For this reason the following rabbinical sentence has been set up: "Man is judged according to that which predominates" (Kid-dushim 40 B.). If the good outweighs the bad, he is accepted. But no one knows how his account stands

with God; the *Sepher Hadin*, i.e., the book of judgment, is God's secret. However, there is always the merit laid up by the fathers, and also the merit gained by the living Zaddikim, to be taken into consideration, which merits come to the good of the rest.

Thus we must come to the conclusion that the Biblical idea of sin and the Rabbinical are at variance. The first recognizes *sin* as the root and *sins* as the fruit. The latter ignores the root of evil deeds, and reduces the latter to the breach of legal precepts only.

Thus the sense of guilt before God who desireth truth in the inward parts is weakened; not recognizing that sin is that which unfits man for the enjoyment of God, bringing forth "death," i.e., the loss of communion with God; that in His favor alone is true life. Nor is salvation apprehended as the recovery of that "life which is life indeed," life in the unclouded light of the divine countenance, the smile of God, which was the object of the soul's quest in Old Testament times.

Sin and Sins in Modern Judaism

It stands to reason that the pantheistic strain that has come into modern Jewish thinking and feeling has seriously affected the idea of sin. For in a pantheistic idea of God the personal relationship is wanting, for sin, rightly understood, is against a Person, infinitely holy and good. As the Psalmist exclaimed: "Against Thee, Thee only, have I sinned and done this evil in Thy sight." The *injury* may be against man; the *sin* is against God. Thus the modern Jew says proudly: "We Jews do not need a mediator between us and God."

Modern Judaism knows nothing of a breach between God and man, a breach which man, from his side, is incapable of removing.

However, God does not leave Himself without witness, not even in the Jewish heart. The conscience may be long stifled, but there are times when its voice is heard. We cannot but admit that the great Day of Atonement gives the conscience an opportunity of uttering its protest against the false philosophies which spirit away the seriousness of sin. But though there must be much sincere seeking for forgiveness and purification from that which separates the soul from God, there is no atonement, for Israel has no temple, no altar, no sacrifice, no high-priestly mediation! Modern Judaism has no divinely imparted and guaranteed reconciliation and peace, any more than the older orthodox and rabbinical. But that opens up another subject which must be treated separately.

XIV

THE DOCTRINE OF THE ATONEMENT

THE Old Testament and the New are at one in their message that “without shedding of blood there is no remission of sins,” that “it is the blood which maketh an atonement for the soul.” Sacrifice as the basis of acceptance with God is the central message of both parts of our Bible. So it ought not be difficult for Jews and Christians who bow before the divine authority of Holy Scripture to agree on the doctrine of salvation by a substitutionary sacrifice.

The Old Testament is saturated with the truth, in symbol and in history, that man cannot stand before God on the ground of his own worthiness, but only on the ground of the doing and dying of Another, shadowed forth in the unblemished sacrifice going up as “sweet savor” before God.

The New Testament makes “the Word of the Cross” central. The Gospels record the history of the death of the Messiah. The Acts the proclamation of it, the resurrection having turned apparent defeat into victory. The Epistles, give us the doctrinal implications of that death. The Apocalypse opens to our view the heavenly world, with its central Object of adoration,

the Lamb as it were slain, in the midst of the throne, securing by His blood a universal and everlasting empire, so that the ravages of sin and its consequences may be eliminated.

Nothing exposes sin like the divine remedy for it. As the poet put it:

“In His spotless soul’s distress,
I perceive my guiltiness;
O how vile my lost estate
Since my ransom was so great!”

Nothing produces hatred of sin and holiness like the vision on the cross of what our sin meant to the sinless One who suffered there; as the same poet added:

“Dwelling on mount Calvary,
Contrite shall my spirit be;
Rest and holiness shall find,
Fashioned like my Savior’s mind.”

Israel has lost its sacrificial approach to God. The temple’s veil is rent. The altar has vanished away. But God never removes one good without giving something better. That is God’s great message to the Hebrew people today. What He gave them once was good. He allowed that good to be taken from them, in order that they might seek and find His “better.” Is not this the key to the Epistle to the Hebrews?

The Messiah has “a more excellent name,” in Chap. I:4, “being made so much better than the angels” by being elevated to God’s right hand.

He has more glory than Moses in Chap. III:3-6, as the Son has a higher place than a servant.

He brings His people into a better rest than Joshua did when he led Israel into Canaan in Chaps. III. 7—IV. 1-10 and the Melchizedekan priesthood of the Messiah is better than that of Aaron, for it will never pass away, in Chap. V and VII.

In Chap. VI there is mention made of “better things” than the best in Judaism (verse 9), even “things that accompany salvation.”

There is now “a better covenant which was established upon better promises” in Chap. VIII. 6, and a better sanctuary, even the real “not made with hands,” into which the Messiah has entered with His own blood in Chap. IX.

In Chap. X the whole subject of the better sacrifice, once for all, has ended the sacrifices that never permanently settled the sin-question, is opened up, and the reason given why they have been now abolished. We need no longer the shadows: the substance has come.

In Chaps. XI. 1—XII. 1, 2, the life of faith is seen, first in the ancient worthies, and finally in the Messiah, whose example of faith eclipses all that went before, inspiring us to heroic living.

In Chap. XII Sinai, the mount that inspired terror, is superseded by Zion, where grace triumphant reigns.

In Chap. XIII we feed off a better altar than the one that once stood in the outward sanctuary, so that, as privileged to enter the Holy of Holies with boldness by the blood of Jesus, we can also joyfully go forth

unto Him inside the camp, bearing His reproach, there offering the sacrifice of praise to God continually, and doing good to others in the unselfish ministry of love.

There is at Jerusalem a heap of stones believed to be all that is left of the temple built by King Solomon, known as "the wailing place." Pious Jews of all countries of their dispersion weep and lament there over the departed glory. It is indeed a heart-moving spectacle.

But why weep over the glory that has vanished! The brighter glory has been revealed "in the face of Jesus Christ." It has no veil upon it to hide its effulgence. Let weeping Israel turn from the dead past to the living present; from the ancient "good" to the eternal "better."

XV

WHY DID JESUS DIE?

WHEN Jesus was here He was in open conflict with the official representatives of Judaism, both with the Sadducees and the Pharisees. He was an object of suspicion to the first because He claimed to be the Messiah; history had shown to them that political disturbances were likely to result from any messianic movement in the land. They were anxious not to give the Romans any pretext for interference. Hence the fear expressed by the Sadducean High-Priest, Caiphas, that if they let Jesus alone the Romans would come and take away both their place and nation. The Pharisees, on the other hand, rejected Jesus for the opposite reason. He did not cater to their nationalistic and chauvinistic expectations. They had no use for a purely spiritual Messiah. However, at the trial of Jesus before the Sanhedrin neither party came out openly with their real objection. They rather framed up a case of "blasphemy" against Him. But that political reasons lay behind the hostility against Jesus of both parties is seen in that they succeeded in getting Him crucified by the Roman governor on the plea that He was a menace to the empire. That was tragic beyond words, as Jesus had carefully separated the idea of "the kingdom" which He proclaimed from merely nationalistic implications,

which indeed Pilate also acknowledged to have been the case. His Kingdom was "not from hence," said Jesus to Pilate.

Was the death of Jesus then nothing more than a political murder? Does it explain everything that He was crucified for reasons of state? His disciples did not think so. Though at first bewildered and panic-stricken by the tragic turn of events, they soon recovered themselves. They came into the open with a twofold message: *Jesus is alive*, and *His death was no defeat; it is the way of reconciliation with God*.

I. Jesus Lives

The resurrection of Jesus was central in the proclamation of His early disciples. The Acts of the Apostles make this evident. This also characterized the public testimony of the apostle Paul. Read the fifteenth chapter of first Corinthians. The apostles placed the emphasis in their public witness on the resurrection of their crucified Master and Lord. No wonder that the opponents of the new movement concentrated on the resurrection as the special target of their criticism. They pretended that it was a case of wishful thinking on the part of the disciples when they asserted that Jesus was alive. That they had hypnotized themselves into that belief. But how they succeeded in making their auto-suggestion the common faith of increasing multitudes, so that today some six hundred millions share it, is a matter that calls for some explanation.

The fact is that the bare historical fact of the empty tomb and the resurrection victory of Him who had

lain in it, is not the whole story. We have to reckon with what the apostle Paul calls "*the power of His resurrection.*" It has become the comfort and support of countless mourners in the hour of bereavement. It has lit up the valley of the shadow of death. It nerved the martyrs when they paid the supreme sacrifice. It assures believers of the removal of their sins and of a sure standing in righteousness before the bar of God. It breaks the power of cancelled sin and sets the prisoner free. You cannot philosophize these things out of existence. They are a standing sign of the truth of Christianity. In presence of Christ risen we join the doubting disciple in adoringly addressing Him with the word: "My Lord and my God."

II. The Death of Jesus Has Atoning Value

The apostle Peter declares that we are not "redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, . . . but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot." So he, the apostle of the original Galilean group, was not at variance with the later called apostle to the Gentiles, whom critics, Jewish and Gentile, accuse with having falsified the original message of Jesus, who wrote: "While we were yet without strength in due time Christ died for the ungodly," and that "God commendeth His love toward us in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us."

But, say the critics, did Jesus, in speaking of His approaching sufferings, attach to His death any such significance? Did His disciples interpret Him correctly? Let us see. He said that He "*came not to be ministered unto but to minister and to give His life a ran-*

some for many." And that is a saying from His lips found in the earliest Gospel, that of Mark. He said at the last meal with His disciples that His blood would be "*shed for the remission of sins,*" and in speaking of Himself as the good Shepherd He declared that "the good Shepherd giveth His life for the sheep." Moreover, when He called Himself "the bread of life," He said that the bread He gives is His flesh which He would give for the life of the world.

But does not this view of the death of Jesus as an atonement for sin slur over the gravity of moral evil? Does it not make sinning easy? Nay, verily, it makes sin hateful and sinning hard. It has a sanctifying influence. Every one who faces the cross of Jesus learns that if the One who died on it was "*made sin*" for sinful man, as He "*knew no sin,*" that *he* is the sinner for whom Jesus died. And if our sin is the true explanation of His death, we cannot but repent of it and turn from it. Thus one of old expressed it in the language of poetical elevation:

"O Head so full of bruises,
 So full of pain and scorn,
 'Mid other sore abuses
 Mocked with a crown of thorn;
 O Head! E'en now surrounded
 With brightest majesty,
 In death once bowed and wounded
 On the accursed tree.

"Thou Countenance transcendent!
 Thou life-creating Sun!
 To worlds on Thee dependent —
 Yet bruised and spit upon:

O Lord! what Thee tormented
Was our sin's heavy load,
We had the debt augmented,
Which Thou didst pay in blood.

“We give Thee thanks unfeigned,
O Saviour! Friend in need,
For what Thy soul sustained,
When Thou for us didst bleed;
Grant us to lean unshaken
Upon Thy faithfulness,
Until to glory taken,
We see Thee face to face.”

XVI

THE EVIDENCES FOR THE TRUTH OF THE RELIGION OF THE NEW COVENANT

BELIEVERS in Jesus of Nazareth being the Messiah of Israel, and of the divine nature of the new covenant era which He has introduced, have many evidences to buttress their assurance. I will refer to some of them.

1. The remarkable prophecies which find in Christ and in Christianity their fulfilment. These prophecies cover a wide field, including His miraculous birth, the place of His birth, His atoning sufferings and subsequent resurrection, etc. *Prophecy* stands midway between *Law* and *Gospel*. It was preparatory to the Gospel. The Law expressed what God *required* of man. Prophecy *what He would do* for man.

2. The extraordinary character of His life. You cannot find a flaw in it.

3. The high moral tone of His teaching. "Never man spake like this Man."

4. The miraculous accompaniments which attested His teaching. Even the Jewish Talmud admits that Jesus wrought marvellous signs, but attributes them to magic.

5. The rapid and triumphant spread of Christianity under most adverse circumstances.

The whole world was against the little band of the early disciples. Jews and Gentiles did their best to stamp out their testimony. But, as with the Hebrews in Egypt: "The more they oppressed them the more they grew." In one generation the Roman Empire was evangelized.

6. The wonderful adaptability of Christianity to all conditions, races, and generations.

There is nothing merely *national* about Jesus, or *racial*, or as belonging to a particular *period in history*, or as more suitable to the *learned* or to the *illiterate*, or to the rich or poor respectively. The universality of His appeal is one of the proofs of His divinity.

7. The power of His doctrine in the personal experience of sincere believers. It produces the Christian character. The Christian character is the reflection of the character of Christ. There are four elements in it.

- (1) The power to love.
- (2) The power to forgive injuries.
- (3) The power to live a pure life.
- (4) The grace of humility.

When the world, unaccustomed to these virtues, saw them shining forth from the first Christians, people were not only astonished, but converted.

Out of the Christian character has come the Christian church and the Christian civilization, two standing monuments to the reality of Christ. Should the

Christian *character* disappear from the earth, the Christian *church* would quickly deteriorate and disintegrate, and the Christian civilization be swept away by resurgent paganism.

These are some of the evidences for the truth of Christianity. But there is a step beyond the acknowledgment of these evidences—the personal surrender of the heart and life to the One who claims to be Messiah and Lord. “He that believeth on the Son hath the witness in himself.” While waiting for the arising of the Messianic Sun of Righteousness to come with healing in its wings over this sad and troubled world, the light of the Spirit of the Messiah shines in the heart that welcomes it, bringing the healing and peace of heaven and establishing the blessed reign of God within.

T H E E N D